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CHRISTIANITY AND SCEPTICISM;

COMPRISING

A TREATMENT OF QUESTIONS

IN

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CHRISTIANITY AND SCEPTICISM.

LECTURES.

NOTE.

In accordance with an apparent demand, it was the aim of the Committee to secure for the year 1871 a course of Lectures somewhat more popular in character than those of the year before. They accordingly chose a series of themes which they believed would be interesting not only to scholars, but perhaps, in equal measure, to the great community of intelligent students of the Bible. For the mode of treatment, however, as well as for all particulars of statement or opinion, the several authors are to have the whole credit and responsibility, each for his own contribution.

While individual themes have been presented, we trust, with satisfactory completeness, the Lectures, taken together, do not assume to form a systematic treatise upon the Bible, or to furnish an exhaustive discussion of all the great questions respecting it which interest the present age. They offer a series of studies upon some of its books, its men, its times, and its claims.

A third course may be expected next year.

Boston, April, 1871.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE RELATIONS OF THE BIBLE TO THE CIVILIZATION OF THE FUTURE.[1]

BY REV. AUSTIN PHELPS, D.D.

HISTORY has learned to recognize the founders of New England among the civilizing powers of the world. Their power is, for the most part, latent, like the forces of Nature. Like those, also, it is constructive. It has been working now for two centuries and more; yet, to-day, it is going on with its creations, giving birth to States, fashioning institutions, breathing free life into nations, with the same unconsciousness of its own majesty which belongs to gravitation.

Like all such unconscious forces in the moral world, however, it is not the power of the men who represented it, but of certain principles which were *in* the men. Those principles, as related to the progress of civilization, may be reduced to two, of a very simple character. The one is their faith in the word of God; the other, their faith in the world's future.

[1] The substance of this discourse was delivered ten years ago, as a sermon, before the Government of Massachusetts. Having been long out of print, it is revised and republished here, as being germane to the general object of this volume.

Our fathers had faith in the Bible. They believed it as no abstraction, concerned rather with other worlds than with this. They embraced it as the most intense reality they knew of. It was as necessary to their daily welfare as the daily sunrise. They grounded their domestic and literary and civil institutions upon it no less heartily than their churches and creeds and pulpits. They would have put a man in the pillory who should have so insulted their consciences, and expressed the degradation of his own, as to deny the obligation of a State to conform to the same standard of right with that which should govern the individual. They consulted the ministers of religion in the framing of their statutes, at the very time when their care against priestly domination was so vigilant, that they forbade the clergy to solemnize the rite of marriage. They fought the battles of the State with Bibles in their knapsacks. They expounded the institutes of Moses, and sang the Psalms of David, on the eve of their victories. It was their faith in the word of God which moved that act of the American Congress, by which, at the height of the Revolution, side by side with appropriations for the purchase of gunpowder, there stood an order for the importation of twenty thousand copies of the Scriptures.

From such a faith as this, it was an inevitable corollary that our fathers should have faith also in the future destiny of this world. Such men could not believe that God would abandon the nations. They were stern predestinarians; but theirs was faith in the predestined triumph of right over wrong, of truth over falsehood, of liberty over slavery, and of a Chris-

tian civilization, therefore, over barbarism, however rooted in history. If ever men deserved the title, they were men of the future. Their ideas penetrated into coming times farther than they themselves saw. They were the builders of structures of which they were not consciously the architects. It has been well said of them, that they had a "high constructive *instinct*, raising them above their age and above themselves." Men who are raised above their age and above themselves, by whatever power, have great visions of truth, which suggest, when they do not reveal, a great future. It was a spiritual inheritance from such men which moved John Adams, in the Congress of 1775, to say, "No assembly ever had a greater number of great objects before them. Provinces, nations, empires, are small things before us." [2]

Tracing our institutions to their origin in such an ancestry, we may not unfitly regard it as our birthright to consider, on an occasion like this, —

SOME OF THE RELATIONS OF THE BIBLE TO THE CIVILIZATION OF THE FUTURE.

The discussion of this theme here must necessarily be fragmentary. It will be my object to direct your thoughts to a few only of the facts in which lie the germs of the control which the Scriptures must exert over the progress of mankind.

I. Of these, we may observe, in the first place, that the Scriptures are believed by candid and scholarly critics to contain the most ancient forms of truth now known to men. In any enlarged view of the forces

[2] Life and Works of John Adams, vol. i. p. 170.

which civilize communities, a place must be found for the instinctive reverence of the human mind for antiquity. A thing is presumptively true if it is old; and an old truth men *will* revere. Such is human nature. We all have historic feelers, which reach out into the past for something to lay hold of, and to hold on by, in the rush of things around us. He is not a bold man, but a weak one, rather, who can tear himself absolutely loose from those roots which run into the under-ground of other ages. It would be an irreparable loss to the civilizing forces of Christendom if the faith of the Christian world could be destroyed in the descent of the race from one pair; so ennobling, and so stimulating to culture, is this instinct of reverence for a long-lived unity. Especially is its power felt in the fashioning and perpetuating of civil and social institutions. An institution becomes to a nation like an heirloom to a family: the longer it *has* been, the more worthy *to be* it appears to the nation's heart. England, within a century, has borne shocks of her social framework which no other nation in Europe could have survived, in part because she has a thousand years of history.

With all the abuses to which this susceptibility of our nature is liable, it is in our nature, and for wise purposes. Within its normal limits, and kept in balance by the opposite spirit of inquiry, its operation is healthful. No grand elevation of society is ever attained without its aid. The Bible invites a large and free indulgence of it by the fact, that in this volume are contained, as we believe, the earliest truthful thoughts of our race in written forms.

To give definiteness to this view, let several speci-

fications be observed in its illustration. It is, for instance, a fact, the significance of which infidelity appreciates, if we do not, that the only authentic *history* of the world before the Flood is found in the sacred books of Christianity. The world of the future never can know any thing of the antediluvians except from the Jewish historian. It would be worth centuries of toil to the socialism of Europe if the infidel science on which it is founded could blot out this one fact in the relations of the world to the Pentateuch. We have also, in the books of Moses, — what no other literature can show, — one or two stanzas of poetry which were actually composed in the antediluvian infancy of the race. Does it not help us to some conception of the venerableness of these volumes to recall that they were written eleven hundred years before Herodotus, whom all other literature denominates the father of history? The Hebrew jurisprudence is seven hundred years older than that of Lycurgus, and two thousand years older than that of Justinian. You have heard that Thomas Jefferson was indebted for his conception of our American government to the polity of an obscure Calvinistic church in Virginia; but republicanism was foreshadowed in the Hebrew commonwealth three thousand years before the settlement of Jamestown.

Dr. Johnson once read a manuscript copy of the book of Ruth to a fashionable circle in London. They begged to know of him where he obtained such an inimitable pastoral. What would have been their amazement if he had concealed the fact of the inspired origin of the story, and had told them that it was an ancient treasure, written twenty-five hundred years

before the discovery of America! The lyric poetry of the Hebrews was in its golden age nearly a thousand years before the birth of Horace. The author of Ecclesiastes discussed the problem of evil six hundred years before Socrates in the dialogues of Plato; and the epithalamium of the Canticles is a thousand years older than Ovid. The book of Esther was a venerable fragment of biography stranger than fiction, at least fifteen hundred years old at the dawn of the romantic literature of Europe. The Proverbs of Solomon are, by nine hundred years, more ancient than the treatises of Seneca. The entire bulk of the prophetic literature of the Hebrews, — a literature extraordinary, one which has laws of its own, to which there is and can be no parallel in any uninspired workings of the human mind, — this mysterious, often unfathomable compendium of the world's future, which the wisdom of twenty centuries has not exhausted, was, the whole of it, anterior to the Augustan age of Rome; and even the writers of the New Testament are, all of them, of more venerable antiquity than Tacitus and Plutarch and Pliny the younger.

And what shall be said of the book of Job? Biblical scholars can only conjecture its age; but if that conjecture be true, which to many has seemed most probable, this is the oldest volume now existing, — at least a thousand years older than Homer. It was already an ancient poem when Cecrops founded Athens. When Britain was invaded by the Romans, it was more time-worn than the name of Julius Cæsar to-day is to us. Natural philosophers now turn to its allusions as the only recorded evidence we have of the state of the arts and sciences four thousand

years ago. A modern commentator on the book has collated from it passages illustrative of the then existing state of knowledge respecting astronomy, geography, cosmology, meteorology, mining operations, precious stones, coining, writing, engraving, medicine, music, hunting, husbandry, modes of travel, the military art, and zoölogy. Any other work, surely, which should be so fortunate as to be of uninspired authority, and should give to the world the obscurest authentic hints of the state of these sciences and arts forty centuries back, would be hailed as a treasure worthy of a nation's purchase.

But these vestiges of antiquity are of little moment considered merely as curiosities of literature. The thing which gives them claim to notice at the present is, that through them there runs a chain of truth representing a work of God for this world's welfare, and that this is the only thing in the world's history which goes back in authentic record to the beginning of time. Such a volume must be, sooner or later, a power in the world's enlightenment; if for no other reason, for the strength of its appeal to man's reverence for long-lived truth. Nations cannot forever throw off its authority if they would. Governments cannot permanently seal it up, nor political science treat it with the contempt of silence. Armies cannot trample it out of life in the souls of men. Manly souls will not let it go from them. It must be felt as one of the powers of control on earth, if this clinging of our nature to ancient forms of truth is designed, in God's purposes, to hold the world fast to any thing in the evolution of its destiny.

II. The sovereignty of the Scriptures in the progress of mankind is further suggested by the fact, that they contain the only development of Oriental mind which can be an authority in the civilization of the future. In an estimate, on any large scale, of the probable advancement of our race, it is impossible to leave out of account the immense masses of being which are congregated in the East. If the most recent reckonings of the population of the globe are true, considerably more than the half of mankind are east of the Mediterranean. Oriental scholars tell us that they find there a civilization as complicated, and in its kind as perfect, as that of the West. Recent history indicates a probable design of Providence to bring the two types of humanity into contact, it may be for a time into conflict, with each other. The Western mind is reaching out from Europe overland, and from this continent across the Pacific; and from both it is peering around the Capes to find out the resources of that Asiatic world, and, if possible, to use them. Every thing betokens an approach of these ends of the earth to greet each other. But for what purpose is the greeting as it regards that Oriental half of mankind? What type of the Asiatic mind, other than that found in the Scriptures, has any prospect of impressing itself on the world's future? What other can possibly become a vitalizing agency in the progress of any thing that enters into our ideal of an elevated and refined humanity?

It is a fact, of which we are apt to be oblivious in responding to questions of this kind, that all the ascendant forces working in modern civilization are Occidental. They are the offspring immediately of

the Western races, of Western ideals of taste, of manners, of learning, of arts, of commerce, of government, and of religion. The national temperaments which they represent, the histories which lie back of them, and the languages which express them, are all the growth of Western climes. The old fancy, that empire follows the sun, is sober truth in the annals of civilization. Oriental life has no perceptible power in them as an authority in any other development than that found in the Scriptures. With the exception of a small group of scholars given to Asiatic researches, the circle even of scholarly thought, in our day, does not go back of the Greek literature chronologically, nor eastward of it geographically. The ancient seats of power have no lines of telegraph connecting them, in the conceptions of modern scholarship, with the empires of the West. The connection exists historically; but it is handed over to antiquarians. Who thinks of it, often, in observing the growth of manhood on this side of the Atlantic? To whom is our derivation from Asiatic progenitors any thing more than a curiosity in ethnologic history? What is there existing in the Oriental forms of life to remind us of it? Where are the powers of Eastern thought which are now creating any thing that seems worthy of the regard of an American scholar or statesman? What have we learned from Japanese and Chinese embassies that has seemed worthy to be ingrafted upon American life and manners? Where are the great libraries of the East, where are the universities, where are the men of literary renown, to attract literary travel beyond the Bosphorus? Where are the advanced forms of government, the improved

ideas of liberty, the superior systems of jurisprudence, the more perfect balancing of the social forces, which should lead an American senator to seek out the wise men of the East? Where is there any thing Eastern which is now projecting itself, by the energy of its own merits, upon Western civilization? The truth is, that a new world has sprung up westward of the Euphrates and the Ural Mountains, which is more than newly-discovered continents. Occidental *mind* is a novelty as related to the earlier developments of the race. It is almost as much isolated from its Oriental progenitors, at all those points of sympathy which form inlets of influence, as if it were the mind of another planet. The only volume, the only thing of elemental energy, which forms an isthmus between the two, on any large scale, is the Christian Scriptures. These have affinities for both. Through these they can come together in brotherhood.

Suspending now, for a few moments, the observation of this fact, let it be remarked, on the other hand, that the Oriental development of man, as a whole, is giving no signs of having finished its work in the divine plans respecting the world's progress. The Oriental races are not only the grandest in respect of numbers, but they are the most various in respect of character, which this planet has yet borne. It is not probable that they are to be a blank in the civilization of the future. Is it not to the last degree improbable that imbecility is to settle henceforth upon that immense Oriental brain? He must have a singular theory of the ascendency of races who can persuade himself that our culture, so exclusively Occidental as it is, has received all that it can receive

from that ancient stock. Nothing in the divine methods of working gives countenance to such presumption.

What *is* the law of Providence respecting nations and races which have finished their work as powers in the world's destiny? It is the law of dissolution. When a nation has ended its mission in the evolutions of the drama which Providence is enacting, that nation dies. When a race of men has reached the point at which God has no further use for them in the future moulding of nations, that race goes out of being as a visibly distinct stock of manhood. It decays and falls off, or by revolution it is pruned off from the trunk, and the sap of the root flows elsewhere. When a type of civilization has grown obsolete in its relations to God's plans for the future, that civilization caves in, and is swallowed up, and covered over by something younger and better. God lives, — we may say it reverently, — God lives, in his government of this world, for the future, never for the past. Races, nations, states, churches, civil institutions, even families, — any thing, in short, that would live, — must move abreast with Providence.

Christianity, which, as wrought into organic social forms, is but the flower and the fruitage of Providence, has always been prophetic in its instincts. It has always been animated with the soul of a seer. It has looked to coming generations, and lived for them. It has never bound itself to the soil anywhere. It has refused to be hemmed in by geographical lines. It calls no land holy merely because it was born there. It has no such romance in its make. The law of its being is, that it shall pass away from super-

annuated to youthful races, from decaying to germinant nations, from expiring to nascent languages. By the decree of God, it is fore-ordained to take possession always of the lands of promise. Its affinities are such as always to draw to itself those elements in families, in churches, in civil institutions, in states, in nations, in tongues, in races of men, which are elastic and eager and foreseeing. Any stock of humanity which is so far worn out as to have lost beyond recovery this capacity for future use, Christianity parts with, leaps away from, and leaves to die. It goes where it finds the most healthy, exuberant energy of production. Mere susceptibility of being acted upon is not sufficient to preserve a nation under this law of Providence. It must have power to *do*, either latent or developed, as well as to *be*, otherwise its permission to be is revoked. Nothing in God's plan of things is purely receptive. Every thing must help another thing. Any thing dies when it ceases to be helpful.

Under this law, the entire Oriental stock of mind, if it has finished its work in God's plan, ought now to be evincing signs of dissolution. The Oriental type of civilization ought, as a whole, to be approaching its extinction. Yet this is by no means the case with it. The nations which represent it, as a whole, are not dying out. They are not visibly *approaching* their end. More than one of the Asiatic races seem to be yet as full-blooded, and as virile in their physical make, and as likely to endure for thirty generations to come, as they did a thousand years ago. That ancient development of manhood, which began on the plains of Shinar, bids fair to live by the side of its

Occidental rival, even if it does not outlive this by reason of its calmer flow of life. If it does thus live, all analogy should lead us to believe that there is something in it which deserves to live. There is something in it which Providence has a use for in the future. It has energy; it has resources; it has manly tastes and proclivities; it has something or other, which, under divine regeneration, would be, will be, a cause of growth, if infused into the life-blood of the Western races. The circle of Occidental development may be enlarged by it. The channel in which our civilization is moving may be thus widened and deepened.

Resuming, now, the connection of this train of thought with the theme more immediately before us, let it be repeated, that the only method by which the Oriental mind can ever thus again affect the civilization of the West is through the forces of the Bible. If new systems of thought are to grow up among the Asiatics with any function of control in the world, they must be the creations of the Bible. Nothing else represents the Oriental mind in any form which can ever rouse it to its utmost of capacity. Nothing else, therefore, can ever enable it to become a power in the future civilization. None but a visionary can look for a rejuvenescence of Asia in the coming ages, from any internal forces now acting there, independently of the Scriptures. The history of the East contains nothing which can ever be to the world what the revived civilizations of Greece and Rome were to the middle ages of Europe. Whatever that immense territory has to contribute to the civilization of the future must come as the illustra-

tion of scriptural modes of thought, and as the fruit of scriptural ideas of truth.

Why should it be deemed visionary to look for this as one of the results of the infusion of European mind now going on in Western and Central Asia, meeting, as it soon must, a similar infusion of American mind from across the Pacific? What, indeed, may not be hoped for from this double overflow of the Occidental civilization, channelled as it is, and is to be, by the work of Christian missionaries? Inspired prophecy aside, it is no more visionary to predict the re-creation of Oriental mind in the forms of new literatures superior to any the world has yet known, through the plastic influence of the Scriptures, than it was to anticipate the birth of the three great literatures of Europe as the fruit of the modern revival of the literatures of Greece and Rome. The mind of nations moves in just such immense waves of revolution. Reasoning *à priori*, they seem impossible, as geologic cataclysms do to a race which has never experienced them; but, reasoning *à posteriori*, they are only the natural effect of a great force generating great forces. They seem as gravitation does to a race which has no conception of what it would be to exist without it. The diurnal revolutions of the planet are not more normal or more sure.

The Asiatic races have, indeed, a fairer intellectual prospect than Europe had at the time of the revival of letters; and this for the reason that they are to receive their higher culture in Christian instead of Pagan forms. Conceive what a difference would have been created in the destinies of Europe, what centuries of conflict with barbarism would to human

view have been saved, if the forms of Greek and Roman literatures could have come into the possession of the modern European mind, embodying Christian rather than Pagan thought, and if, thus Christianized, they could have been wrought into European culture! Yet just this, to a very large extent, appears likely to be the process of intellectual awakening to which the immense forces of Asiatic mind are to be subjected. Asiatic literatures of the future are to be the direct product of centuries of Christian culture in other lands. They are to have no paganism to exorcise, as European civilization had, from the very models which are to inspire them. In Asia, paganism is to represent to the future, not only dead institutions, oppressive governments, degrading traditions, and popular wretchedness, but a puerile literature as well. It can never there, as it did in Europe, go into solution with Christianity through the force of a pagan culture so beautiful and so lofty as to command the reverence of all enterprising scholarship.

Napoleon used to say that the only theatre fit for great exploits was the East. Europe, he said, was contracted; it was provincial: the great races were beyond the Mediterranean. They were in the ancient seats of empire, because the numbers were there. There may be more of truth in this than he meant to utter. The grandest intellectual and moral conquests of the world may yet follow the track of Alexander.

III. Passing now from the Oriental world, we may observe a further source of the ascendency of the Bible in the institutions of the future in the fact

that it is already wrought into all the dominant forces of the civilization of the West. Not that it is in them all with equal efficiency, but in all of them in such degree as to make itself obvious. When we speak of the sway of European and American mind, we speak the conquests of the Scriptures. The elemental ideas of the Bible lie at the foundation of the whole of it. Christianity has wrought such revolutions of opinion; it has thrown into the world so much of original thought; it has organized so many institutions, customs, unwritten laws of life; it has leavened society with such a powerful antiseptic to the putrescent elements of depravity; and it has, therefore, positively created so much of the best material of humanity, — that now the noblest type of civilization cannot be conceived of otherwise than as a debtor to the Christian Scriptures.

This obligation becomes most obvious in our modern literature, because there the ideas which are creative in our civilization take on forms of speech. The debt of literature to the Bible is like the debt of vegetation to light. No other volume has contributed so much to the great organic forms of thought; no other is fusing itself so widely into the standards of libraries. Homer and Plato and Aristotle long since gave place to it as an intellectual power. This volume has never yet, at any one time, numbered among its believers a fourth part of the human race; yet it has swayed a greater *amount* of mind than any other volume the world has known. It has the singular faculty of attracting to itself the thinkers of the world, either as friends or as opponents, always, everywhere. The works of comment upon it,

of themselves, form a literature of which any nation might be proud. It is more voluminous than all that remains to us of the Greek and Roman literatures combined. An English antiquarian, who has had the curiosity to number the existing commentaries upon the Scriptures, or upon portions of them, found the number to exceed sixty thousand. Where is another empire of mind to be found like this?

Here is a power, which, say what we may of its results, has set the Christian world to thinking, and kept it thinking, for nearly two thousand years. The unpublished literature of the Christian pulpit surpasses in volume all the libraries of all the nations. "If the sermons preached in our land during a single year were all printed," says a living scholar, "they would fill a hundred and twenty million octavo pages. Many of these sermons are, indeed, specimens of human weakness; but the frailest vase may hold roots that will far outgrow its own dimensions."[3] The Bible is read to-day by a larger number of educated minds than any other book. Innumerable multitudes are poring over its pages, and are feeling its elevating, refining influence, who never think of it otherwise than as the authority of their religious faith.[4] Harvard College, at a time when the material civilization of Massachusetts was so meagre that a pewter flagon and a bushel of corn

[3] Prof. E. A. Park's Election Sermon, 1851, p. 12.

[4] "The number of English Bibles and New Testaments, separately, which have passed through the press within the recollection of many now living, has exceeded the number of souls in Britain. In the space of twelve months, the press has sent forth more than a million of copies; or say above nineteen thousand every week, above three thousand every day, three hundred every hour, or five every minute, of working-time." — *Anderson's Annals of the English Bible*, vol. i.; *Preface*, p. 8.

were received gratefully as a contribution to the collegiate funds, was founded by men, some of whom could regale themselves in their hours of leisure by conversing in the original language of the Old Testament. Our own language owes, in part, the very structure it has received to influences exerted upon it by our English Bible. No Englishman or American knows well his mother-tongue till he has learned it in the vocabulary and the idioms of King James's translation. In English form, the Bible stands at the head of the streams of English conquests and of English and American colonization and commerce. It must control, in large degree, the institutions which are to spring up on the banks of those streams the world over.

It is interesting to observe how the influence of the Bible trickles down into crevices in all other literature, and shows itself at length in golden veins, and precious gems of thought, which are the admiration of all observers, but for which He who made them often receives no thanksgiving.[5] Wordsworth's criticism of Milton, that, "however imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul," is true of very much that is most inspiring and most durable in our modern poetry. The "Ode on Immortality" could never have been written but

[5] The late Prof. B. B. Edwards, in his admirable Essay on the Hebrew Poetry, observes, "It supplies the seeds of thought, the suggestive hints, the little germs, the dim conceptions, the outlines, of some of the sublimest poems, or passages of poems, to be found in modern literature. It is easy to perceive the influence of the Scriptures on the imagination of Spenser. The Messiah of Pope is only a paraphrase of some passages in Isaiah. The highest strains of Cowper, in his Task, are but an expansion of a chapter of the same prophet. In the Thanatopsis of Bryant, [certain] lines remind us at once of the words of Job. Lord Byron's celebrated poem on Darkness was evidently founded on a passage in Jeremiah. — *Writings*, vol. ii. pp. 389, 390.

for the creative effect upon the poet's imagination of such scriptures as the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians and the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Pantheism has a cool way of appropriating a great deal of Christian poetry. Thus it claims Wordsworth; but the most autobiographic passages in "The Excursion," descriptive of the communion of his soul with Nature, could never have been conceived but by a mind which was permeated by the inspiration of the hundred and forty-eighth Psalm.

> "In such access of mind, in such high hour
> Of visitation from the living God,"

is the language in which he himself describes that communion.

Shakspeare's conception of woman is another illustration to the same effect. De Quincey claims it as an absolute original, by no other genius than Shakspeare's. But, in the last analysis, Shakspeare's ideal is only the Christian ideal, which suffuses with refinement our modern life. We owe it ultimately, not to poetry, but to the biblical fact of the atonement. Nothing else has made the conception possible of a Desdemona or Ophelia growing out of a sex degraded in all other than Christian literatures.

The hymnological literature of all modern languages has been absolutely created by the Hebrew psalmody. The ancient classics have not contributed a stanza to it. Not a line of it lives, through two generations, in which the genius of the Psalms of David does not overpower and appropriate all other

resources of culture. The old English and Scottish ballads never exerted on the national mind a tithe of the influence of the Hebrew psalm. The Commonwealth of England owed its existence, in part, to the psalm-singing of Cromwell's armies. On the continent of Europe, also, the whole bulk of the despotism of the middle ages went down, for a time, before the rude imitations of the Hebrew psalmody by Clement Marot and Hans Sachs. The battle-song of Gustavus Adolphus was originally published with this title: "A heart-cheering Song of Comfort on the Watchword of the Evangelical Army in the Battle of Leipsic, Sept. 7, 1631, 'God with Us.'"

Who shall worthily portray the obligations of American institutions to the word of God? Sir James Mackintosh says that the "Independent divines" first taught to John Locke "those principles of religious liberty which they were the first to disclose to the world."[6] But why should the Independent *divines* have been the pioneers of such discovery? "Democracy is Christ's Government" was the theme of a pamphlet by a humble pastor of Massachusetts in 1687; which nearly a hundred years later, on the eve of our Revolution, was republished as a political document becoming to the times.[7]

On a sabbath morning, the 8th of June, 1766, when

[6] Mackintosh's Miscellaneous Works, second edition. London. Page 152. In a note upon Orme's Memoirs of Dr. Owen, he adds, "In this very able volume it is clearly proved that the Independents were the first teachers of religious liberty. . . . It is an important fact in the history of toleration, that Dr. Owen, the Independent, was Dean of Christ Church in 1651, when Locke was admitted a member of that college, '*under a funatical tutor*,' as Anthony Wood says."

[7] Thornton's Pulpit of the American Revolution. Introduction, p. 29.

the old charter of Massachusetts was in peril, Jonathan Mayhew, pastor of the West Church in Boston, hallowed his last day of health in that city by writing to James Otis, "You have heard of the communion of churches. . . . While I was thinking of this in my bed, the great use and importance of a communion of colonies appeared to me in a strong light, which led me immediately to set down these hints to transmit to you." [8] That was the germ from which sprang the union of these States. But where did Jonathan Mayhew find the idea of the communion of churches? He found it where he found the other great thoughts which inspired his love of liberty. In a sermon preached to his people on the occasion of the repeal of the Stamp Act, he said, "Having learned from the *Holy Scriptures* that wise and brave and virtuous men are always friends to liberty, . . . and that, where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty, — *this* made me conclude that freedom is a great blessing." [9]

Eloquent defenders of liberty in parliament and senate have echoed the voice of this patriotic pastor by their own indebtedness to the same fountain of freedom and free speech. The Earl of Chatham acknowledged that he owed much of his power in parliamentary debate to the apostle Paul. Patrick Henry and James Otis were often likened in their day to the Hebrew prophets. Lord Brougham and Daniel Webster have both expressed their sense of obligation to the same models. Webster was for

[8] Bradford's Life of Mayhew, pp. 428, 429.

[9] The Snare Broken, — a Thanksgiving Discourse by Dr. Mayhew, preached May 23, 1766; p. 43.

years the concordance of the Senate of the United States. It is said that some of his ablest opponents have been known to seek the aid of his memory to furnish them with biblical references with which to condense and point their own speeches against him; yet such was *his* affluence in command of the same resources, that he could afford to give them liberally, and without upbraiding.

To all departments of modern thought, the Scriptures have been what they have been to modern art. It has been said that the single conception of the Virgin and her Child has achieved more for the elevation of art than all the exhumed models of Greece and Rome. It is a well-known fact, that nothing in art itself succeeded in crushing out the moral abominations which many of those models expressed, until the Christian religion flooded the realm of beauty with more intense ideas of life; so that, to the purest taste, the Greek Venus has become imbecile by the side of the Christian Madonna. So is the Bible dropping everywhere its germs of refinement in modern civilization, beyond the depth of Greek and Roman thought in its choicest and most durable forms.

I would not weary you with an enumeration of examples of a truth so obvious; but it is illustrated with singular vividness in one phenomenon of our age, which you will permit me to notice. I allude to *the unconscious debt of infidelity to biblical resources.* The energy of a moral power is often seen most impressively in the disasters which attend its perversions. So the power with which the Scriptures are working in modern mind is disclosed in the vigor of our infidel literature. That literature owes nearly all the vitality

it has to its pilferings of Christian nutriment. Its very life-blood comes by unconscious suction from Christian fountains. "The Pilgrim's Progress" and "The Paradise Lost" are not more palpably indebted to the Bible than are many of the most thrilling conceptions in anti-Christian productions of our times. The most popular and effective of them no man could have written whose genius had not been developed by Christianity. No man *would* have written them whose infidelity had not been fired by collision with the Epistle to the Romans.

Atheism, as is well known, is now working disastrously among the artisan-classes of Great Britain; but it owes the chief source of its power over the popular mind to the fact that it holds on to so much of scriptural thought, though struggling to enforce it without a scriptural God. Its capital ideas are biblical ideas. Strip it of these, and it would have no more chance of a hearing in the workshops of Birmingham and Manchester than the vagaries of Buddhism. What else than Christianity ever gave to the human conscience *spring* enough to enable it to conceive of such a thing as a practical religion without a God? Yet just that is English atheism to-day.[10]

[10] On this topic the learned author of the Natural History of Enthusiasm remarks as follows: "The *disbelief* of these last days, so far as it is a scheme of doctrine, may be shown to be a birth of Christian doctrine. The Atheism partly, and the Theism entirely, of the present time, is a heresy full of Christian sap. By calling it *Christian*, I mean that it has no meaning at all except that which it has wrung from elements of Christian belief, brought into collision one with another. Atheism, in these days, is not, as of old, a metaphysic abstraction, or a cold paradox; but it is a living creature, speaking with a loud voice, and showing a ruddy cheek, because it has drawn life-blood from that which can spare much, and yet live. If the gospel, the destruction of which is so eagerly desired by some among us, were actually to breathe its last, not one of the schemes of doctrine which is now offered to us in its stead would thenceforward draw another breath." — *The Restoration of Belief*, p. 245.

It is not vice; it is not conscious blasphemy; it is not moral anarchy: it is an aim at morality, at moral culture, at moral principle, at moral progress, at moral worship after its kind, all sustained in theory by the force of moral instincts, without a God for their centre. When did any human soul ever get force enough of moral instincts to conceive such an idea as that?

Similar to this is the chief lesson which we have to learn from the most captivating phases of infidelity in our own country. It would be entertaining, if it were not too painfully solemn, to observe the depth to which Christian thought has penetrated, and the extent to which Christian colorings of speech have suffused, the culture exhibited by the most effective of the infidel writers among us. Mark it anywhere, — on the platform, in newspapers, in magazines, in books, — the materials of thought which these lecturers, critics, philosophers, seers, are wielding to the saddest hurt of Christian faith, are, at bottom, Christian products. No other class of literary men are so profoundly indebted to the Scriptures, and yet so profoundly oblivious of the debt. Open the book of this class which first occurs to you as the most fascinating specimen of the whole; turn to its most captivating pages; sift its style; weigh its thought: and what do you find of good, sterling worth? Wherever you find clear ideas, held in honest Saxon grip, so that you can get at them, and see them all around and all through, and know what you know of them, — if they prove to be good for any thing, you find them created or vivified by something which the writer owes to Christianity. Here it is a truth as old as Moses; there it

is the power to conceive of the opposite of a truth: again it is an antithesis of half-truths; farther on it is a dislocated quotation; then a warped and twisted allusion: now it is an infidel fungus overgrowing a germ of truth which gives it its power to grow; then it is a Pantheistic turn to language, which, in its original, Christian souls love. Even down to the indefinable ingenuities and sinuosities of style, you find at work the alert or the sinewy fingers of a Christian culture. The very sentences which express or imply semi-paganism in theology, but the rhetoric of which makes them ring like the crack of a pistol, are, as specimens of style, the product of a Saxon Bible. Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, at the root of the thoughts and the forms which move you in such pages? Nonsense! It is Moses; it is Isaiah; it is David; it is Paul, John, Christ. Eliminate the elements of culture which these have contributed to such literature, and no man living would care what gods or heroes or sages might claim the residuum.

The most striking illustration, because the most earnest mind, in my judgment, which has exhibited the truth of the fact before us, is that of Theodore Parker. For twenty years, the most vital infidelity of this land was personified and concentrated in him. He brought to that solitary altar at which he ministered a more generous scholarship, a more mercurial genius, a more versatile command of thought, and a more fascinating style, taking him all in all, a more earnest character and a more ascetic life, than any other of our countrymen has ever arrayed against what he used to call the "popular theology of New England." For one, I must concede the vigor of his influence. With all

the evidences which were apparent, that its acme had been reached, and its decline had commenced, during the last years of his life, I am compelled to believe that no candid man among his opponents, who knows the classes of mind which have been addressed, and the energy with which they have been moved, in yonder Music Hall, will feel, that, as a friend of truth, he can afford to ignore that influence, or to underrate it. We have not yet seen the end of it. The man has gone; but he represented, and his name still represents, opinions which are a power in the conflict of ideas among us. Yet his power was not the power of his infidelity: it was the power of his unconscious obligations to the very truth which he discarded. His vital and vitalizing ideas — those which were electric to the popular conscience, and imperial over the popular heart — were Christian ideas. He owed them to the Bible, which he disowned. He derived them from all the living literatures which he mastered. He could not get away from those streams of Christian thought. He absorbed them from the very atmosphere of our biblical civilization. The workings of his mind were in part like respiration, in which a man inhales the pure air which God made for his sustenance, and exhales mephitic vapors. He maligned our religion; he ridiculed our sacred oracles; he denounced our hope of heaven; he scoffed at our Redeemer; he uttered language, which, from our lips, would be the unpardonable sin. Yet the internal forces which bore up, as on a ground-swell, this nameless craft, so revolting to our view, and propelled it often at the top of the wave in the popular vision, were forces, every one of which sprang from that ocean of inspired thought

whose great deeps were broken up in the civilization and the literature around him. His idea of the dignity of manhood, of the singleness of individual being, of the brotherhood of the race, of the intensity of life under the shadow of immortality, of the paternity and the love of God, of the right of free inquiry, of the despicableness of cant in every form, and the ideas of social and of political and of moral reform which grew out of these as corollaries, — such were the elements of his strength. For the right to wield them he stood up as a free man, with a free tongue; and for this we honor him: yet for every one of these ideas we hold him as a debtor to the old scriptural theology of New England.

Thus it is with every development of infidelity which has force enough of character to render it respectable. It feeds on Christianity itself, and grows lusty *therefore*. Christian thought comes into this world, and goes through it, like an immense projectile. It creates, in the surrounding atmosphere on either side, currents which are no part of it. Yet they imitate its magnitude; they border on its track; they catch the rate of its momentum, and so keep pace with it in speed, like the wind of a cannon-ball. Hence it is that infidelity appears often to grow in the intensity of its spirit. Hence it seems often to accumulate resources of destructiveness. Each new phase of it seems more formidable than the last. It is because the scriptural standards of thought are working their way deeper into the convictions of men, are agitating more profoundly the passions of men, are swaying the nobler orders of intellect and the finer forms of culture, and are hastening more

swiftly to the ultimate conflicts of truth with error. The whole being of a Christian nation is thus intensified. The Bible, like the sun, thus shines on the evil and on the good. It fertilizes the soil of infidel opinions; and these, in turn, fling up, in defiance of it, a portion of the fruits of its own vitality.

IV. Some of the views thus far presented involve another fact, indicative of the ascendency of the Bible in the future progress of the race. It is, that the Bible discloses the only groundwork and process of a perfect civilization as a practicable result.

A scheme of social advancement, as such, the Bible does not delineate. The word "civilization" does not once occur in it. The *things* in which an elevated social economy reveals itself to political wisdom are not at all obtrusive upon the foreground of scriptural thought. Wealth, arts, literature, science, urbanity of manners, domestic comfort, institutions of charity, free governments, — these are not the salient themes here, either of argument or of promise. A reformer might study pages of this volume, covering a thousand years of history, and not discover that inspired minds ever thought of any such sort of thing; yet a wise man, instructed in God's wisdom, may traverse the same ground, and so discern the gravitating of principles towards social results as almost to imagine that inspired minds thought of nothing else.

The idea out of which the future civilization must grow is here, there, everywhere, in this Book of Life. You anticipate me in affirming that that idea is *the moral regeneration of the individual.* In this one aim lies the rudiment of all that is practicable for the

amelioration of the race. This is the germ of the whole tree. The wisdom of God is to begin at the beginning. The wise master-builder starts at the foundation, and builds up. The pulpit, especially in its friction against more flimsy engines of reform, has made this idea familiar to us all. Let us therefore, more summarily than would be otherwise desirable, observe the method by which Christianity works as an organ of political and social movement.

In the first place, *it exalts spiritual over material forces.* It aims at souls rather than bodies. "Mine is a kingdom," it says, "which is not of this world." Steam, railways, telegraphs, ships, cotton-gins, spinning-jennies, printing-presses, and the like, are not, in the Christian theory, the elemental civilizing *powers.* They are effects and incidents. The powers which lie back of them are ideas. They lay hold of the only thing on this earth which is immortal. The stir of physical forces is only the fermentation incident to the working of ideas in a world of sense. The material creation groans and travails because it is put to great uses in expressing the throes of the spirit, which is its lord. In such a system of things, cotton is not king, and corn is not king, and gold is not king: thought is king, mind is king, character is king.

Working thus with spiritual forces, *Christianity intensifies individual being.* It deals, not with humanity, but with men, and takes them as they are. It sets the individual man to searching after God. It stimulates the sense of individual responsibility to a personal Deity. It evokes the consciousness of individual sin. It makes a man feel the infinite solitude of guilt, as if there were no other beings in the universe but himself

and God. To that only Friend it directs his cry for help, as to One who is not shocked nor disgusted by his vileness, but who can be touched with the feeling of his infirmities, and who is ever saying to him, "Come unto me, my child." It reveals the practicability of individual regeneration by God only, through individual faith in Christ, expanding and blooming into the graces of a Christlike character.

Intensifying thus the individuality of the soul, Christianity presumes the whole process to be, as in experience it proves itself to be, *a process of symmetrical elevation.* An uplifting of the entire being is the result. Affinities spring into life with all that is lovely and of good report. Aspirations after growth in every thing that may dignify a man come by a law as sure as that by which respiration comes to the newly-born. Advance becomes a necessity. Heavenly voices speak, saying, "Come up hither; forget the things which are behind thee; thine is a high calling."

Lifting thus the individual mind, Christianity *sets to working a power which is diffusive.* The man is a part of humanity: he begins to move it as he himself is moved. The individual is an elevating force to the family, and through the family to the community, and through the community to the state, and through the state to the age and the race. Christianity presupposes what history proves, that individual consciences, thus illumined, intensified, redeemed from the dominion of guilt, will sway the world. Dotting the globe over with points of light, they radiate towards each other: each reduplicates the illuminating power of another. They run together, sometimes by imperceptible advances, like the movement of the fixed

stars; yet in golden moments of history, times of refreshing to an expectant and weary world, they are, like material light, the swiftest of the elements.

Diffusing itself thus as a power of moral illumination, *Christianity is affluent in the production of certain auxiliary ideas.* These, like itself, are spiritual; and they take on social and civil and political forms. They are constructive ideas. They work in building institutions, customs, forms and reforms of government, much as the instinct in a beehive works. From the intensity which the Christian theory of manhood gives to individual being, start forth as collaterals such ideas as the equality of the race, the brotherhood of man with man, the nobility of woman, the inhumanity of war, the odiousness of slavery, the dignity of labor, the worth of education, and the blessedness of charity. Institutions which are the consolidation of such ideas, Christianity drops from her open hand, in and around the homes of men, for the healing of the nations; and the point of significance is, that the nations never get them from any other source.

I have said that civilization as a scheme of social progress is not expressed in the Bible. Yet once more be it observed, that, while throwing out into the world these ideas which are auxiliary to its direct aim, the Bible does exhibit, if I may so speak, a certain divine *consciousness, that they must and will, and a purpose that they shall, become constructive elements in society.* This is exhibited, for instance, in that most luminous fact in scriptural history, that God educates nations as the representatives of principles. No thinking man can review the four thousand years

of history covered by the Old Testament without discerning that nations are servitors of God's purposes, arranged along a line of advance in the development of a plan. They are like a cordon of military posts along a king's highway.

Equally obvious is this breadth of providential design in the scriptural fact, that God destroys some nations to make way for the establishment of truth in others. The biblical interpretation of the history of such empires as those of Babylon and Egypt is simply this, — that, when a nation plants itself in the way of a plan of God for the progress of the race, Divine Providence waits with long-suffering while the pride and pomp and circumstance of national impiety accumulate, but at the same time gathers alongside of these the materials of retribution; and at last, with an awful composure, a composure like to nothing else than the stillness of eternity, God sacrifices that nation to a principle. To any people who are identified with a principle in God's purposes, though they be but a handful of slaves under the taskmasters of the Pharaohs, the language of Providence is, "Fear not: since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life."

The same reach of truth beyond the destiny of the individual is shadowed forth in certain intimations of biblical writers themselves, that their teachings must become disturbing forces in society. A celebrated English scholar says that the idea of the unnatural structure of the social life of England, in certain respects, first dawned upon his mind in reading the

Epistle of James and the prophets of the Old Testament. The commission of our Lord himself to his disciples affirms, as distinctly as language can, that the gospel they were to preach was to become the occasion of social disquietudes and collisions; and more, that it was to advance amidst the shock of battle, by the agency of suffering, and at the cost of life. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth," is his language: "I come not to send peace, but a sword."

But we are not left to intimations alone of the inspired insight into the working of religious ideas in social institutions. The *design* of such ideas to work thus is seen in some of the actual uses made of them by inspiration itself. It is an inexplicable anomaly, that honest minds can read certain portions of the Scriptures, like some of the teachings of the prophets and of the apostle James, and yet hold the scriptural policy in the applications of the gospel to social and political abuses to be the policy of silence or of reserve. The late Dr. Arnold of Rugby, who, perhaps more than any other man of our times, made the Scriptures his study with reference to this thing, alludes to a recommendation which had been made in a time of national commotion in England, that the clergy should preach only subordination and obedience. "I seriously say," he writes, "God forbid they should! for, if any earthly thing could ruin Christianity in England, it would be this. If they read Isaiah and Jeremiah, and Amos and Habbakuk, they will find that the prophets, in a similar state of society in Judæa, did not preach subordination only or chiefly: but they denounced oppression, and amassing overgrown

properties, and grinding the laborers to the smallest possible pittance; and they denounced the Jewish high-church party for countenancing these iniquities, and prophesying smooth things." [11]

The scriptural principle in the application of Christianity to social wrong may be summed up in this, — *the temporary toleration of evil, followed by timely efforts for its extinction.* It is the wisdom of the Bible, as of Providence, to be merciful to the evil and the unthankful. The sufferance of wrong, the toleration of sin even, it endures, so long as the national conscience is not educated to distinct cognizance of the sin. "I have many things to say unto you" is often its sad burden; "but ye cannot bear them now." But, on the other hand, the wisdom of the Bible, as of Providence, is to endure no hiding of wrong, and no compromise with wrong, seen and felt *to be* wrong by the national mind. When Christian truth has so trained a people that they begin to rise above the corruption of ages, and to grow into capacity to catch some glimmering of light upon a national distortion, then the prophets and apostles of Christianity are on the alert, quick to point out that distortion as a sin; to denounce it without stint, as a wrong against humanity, and a crime against God. Then truth becomes a fire and a hammer. It verifies by its working the saying of one of our wise men, that, "when God prepares a hammer, it will not be made of silk." This is the genius of biblical reform. Large portions of the Bible are alive with it. Suspense of judgment upon wrong, I repeat, is in the Scriptures, as it is in Providence, only so far as it is mercy to the weakness

[11] Arnold's Life and Correspondence, American edition, p. 179.

and the blindness of men. It exists always for the sake of the extinction of the wrong; never for its increase, never for its perpetuity, never for the convenience of letting it alone. Inspiration does, indeed, practise as it preaches the wisdom of the serpent, but always in conjunction with the innocence of the dove.

Perhaps more convincingly than in any other form, the diffusion of the effects of Christianity into the social economy is seen in the predictions of the final triumph of the gospel by the conversion of the world to Christ. It is impossible to look attentively upon the scriptural picture of this world as it is to be in its latter days, without catching from inspiration an assurance that those are to be days of great intellectual and social and civil and political as well as of moral elevation. They are to be days of peace among the nations: swords shall become ploughshares, and spears pruning-hooks. They shall be days of the supremacy of right over wrong in the government of States: "I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness;" "Nations shall say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." They shall be days in which the great powers of the world shall acknowledge the dominion of Christ: "All kings shall fall down before him." It shall be an era of intellectual advancement: "Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times."[12] They

[12] The elder President Edwards, in his History of Redemption, speaking of the ultimate prevalence of knowledge in the earth, observes, "It may be hoped that then many of the Negroes and Indians will be divines; and that excellent books will be published in Africa, in Ethiopia, in Tartary, and other now the most barbarous countries; and not only learned men, but others of more ordinary education, shall then be very knowing in religion. Knowledge shall then be very universal among all sorts of persons." — *Works*, vol. i. p. 481.

shall be times marked by revolutions of false public opinion: "In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity; they also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding." Those days shall witness signal advances upon preceding states of society: "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron." The natural obstacles to progress shall be removed: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." Changes so marvellous shall occur in the relations of conflicting races, that they shall seem like a reversal of the laws of Nature: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion and the fatling together."

In no deformed, degraded, brutalized types of humanity, then, but in the noblest and most pure, are the nations to be given to Christ for his inheritance. "He shall see," — He whose ideal is his own pure consciousness of what manhood *can* be, — "*He* shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be *satisfied*."

Starting thus with the idea of the moral regeneration of the individual, the word of God conducts us, by easy and inevitable advances, to that truth which becomes its own witness to a Christian believer, — that THE CIVILIZATION OF THE FUTURE, AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE BIBLE, ARE IDENTICAL.

I.

THE PRIMEVAL REVELATION.

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THE charge often brought against the Bible, that it is to every one what he wishes it to be, contains an element of truth. Even a rationalistic writer has said, "While, in our notions respecting the history" of the Jews, "we are dependent on our knowledge of its sources, on the other hand, our examination of the sources will always be more or less affected by our judgment respecting the history."[1] This principle is sound and suggestive. If a man regards the history of the Jews as having no peculiar religious significance for the world, his opinion of the importance of the Jewish Scriptures must differ from that of one who sees in that nation a people specially chosen of God. In order to a correct appreciation of the books, one must have a correct impression respecting the people. The judgment concerning the people precedes the judgment concerning the books: it is therefore a prejudgment, a prejudice. In truth, every judgment which we form rests on a judgment

[1] Weber, in Weber und Holtzmann's *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, p. xxxv.

previously formed. It is not the fact, but the wrong character, or unjustifiable application, of such anterior judgment, which gives to the word "prejudice" its odious sense. When, therefore, the believer in the Bible is charged with prejudice, bias, bigotry, because he refuses to put the book into the same category with all other writings of antiquity, he may be warranted in retorting the charge upon his accuser. For every book ought to be estimated in reference to what it appears or professes to be. The Bible claims to be the record of a divine revelation; and whether we must admit its claim, or not, still our judgment respecting it cannot but be affected by our opinion about the need and the probability of there being any revelation. If we think that one ought to have been and has been made, we shall examine the Bible with at least some expectation of finding traces of it there: if we think that a revelation is needless or impossible, we shall not only not expect to find, but shall be very certain not to find, any proof of one in the Jewish or Christian writings. There must, then, be a bias. The absence of preconception would itself be a preconception. To overlook the evidence of a divine revelation is, in this connection, the same as to deny the existence of it. But these charges and countercharges can do little good, unless they lead both parties to see, that, before any fair sentence can be pronounced on the merits of the Bible, a preliminary question must first be settled. To that question, then, let us turn.

I. Is it credible that a supernatural revelation should be made? If we deny the existence, or personality, of God, this question is at once decided in

the negative. But we here confine ourselves to the issue which is raised between believers in the Bible, and those who, while they avow the most unqualified belief in a God characterized by wisdom, power, and love, yet as emphatically deny that he can ever have supernaturally revealed himself. Let us consider the objections which come from this source against the credibility of a supernatural revelation.

1. It is objected, that a supernatural revelation is needless. Thus Theodore Parker says, "To obtain a knowledge of duty, a man is not sent away outside of himself, to ancient documents, for the only rule of faith and practice: the Word is very nigh him, — even in his heart; and by this Word he is to try all documents whatever. Inspiration, like God's omnipresence, is not limited to the few writers claimed by the Jews, Christians, or Mahometans, but is co-extensive with the race."[2] According to this, then, a special revelation is not to be looked for, because it is unnecessary; and it is unnecessary, because every man is inspired. The inspiration is diffused through the race, instead of being concentrated in a few individuals.

If, however, each man is able, by the criterion of his own inspiration, to try all documents, and all religious deliverances of other men, it cannot but strike even the superficial observer, that this divine inspiration, which is so impartially diffused throughout mankind, must be, nevertheless, either very self-contradictory, or very meagre; for, in point of fact, nothing can be more divergent than the opinions of men in regard to what divine truth is; and whether this disagreement comes from the defects, or the

[2] Works, vol. i. p. 139.

deficiency, of the inspiration, in either case the plain inference would seem to be, that there is, after all, a great lack of genuine inspiration: either we need a better kind, or we need more of it. When, therefore, Mr. Parker complains that man, according to the view of ordinary Christians, "is the veriest wretch in creation," because he cannot, without a miracle, "tell good from evil, nor determine that there is a God," while yet "he can invent the steam-engine, and calculate the orbit of Halley's comet,"[3] we are constrained to reply, that, if man's ability to find out his relation to God be only commensurate with his ability to calculate the orbit of comets, then he is a wretched being indeed. To this fine-sounding talk about the absolute religion and the universal inspiration we simply rejoin, Show it to us; tell us where and what this religion is, which has been held *semper*, *ubique*, *et ab omnibus*. Since it is set over against the religions of alleged revelation, as superior to them and as making them unnecessary, let it, at least, be clearly defined. But, when this task is attempted, what is the result? To discover this absolute religion, each man must use his own individual inspiration. He must judge for himself, among the multitudinous forms of the religion, which is entitled to the crown. But still, when he has reached his conclusion, — itself no slight task, one would think, — it is only *his* conclusion. The next man may come to a different one; and so the result is, that either we have a vast multitude of absolute religions; or, if there is only one, no man can certainly know what it is. In order to find it out, some one needs to be specially inspired to detect it;

[3] Works, vol. i. p. 134.

and yet this cannot be allowed, for such a special inspiration is just what the theory of the absolute religion was propounded to avoid.

So much with regard to religion as a belief. When we come to inquire what this absolute religion, this universal inspiration, has done morally to regenerate and elevate the race, we have still more reason to be surprised to hear it called the *ne plus ultra* of human hopes. When we look at the actual condition of mankind, and consider how long and how universally this absolute religion has been exerting its influence, who can help concluding, that, if the world is what it is on account of this religion, the less we have of it the better? and, if the world is what it is in spite of it, then, surely, nothing can be more desirable than a supernatural addition to it?

2. It is objected, again, that a supernatural revelation would be harmful. A revealed religion would be an authoritative religion. But such a revelation, it is said, would reduce men to a state of intellectual bondage. It would compel men to surrender the sacred right of private judgment, — the peculiarly human prerogative of freedom. Thus, in a recent statement of the principles of the so-called free-religious movement, one of the most prominent representatives of the movement, in defining Christianity, says, "It claims absolute control over the collective life of society and the outward and inward life of the individual. It rests this claim on the supernatural revelation of the will of God; that is, on the principle of divine authority." It is evidently, in the writer's mind, a corollary of this, when he adds, "This system demands absolute and unreasoning submission

from the human mind. It teaches that doubt is sin, and disbelief is damnation. It everywhere condemns freedom of thought, and persecutes it in proportion to its power. It is the worst enemy of liberty, science, and civilization, because it is organized despair of man."[4]

Now, not to dwell on the strong form of some of these statements, it is clear that the gist of the objection is just this: That Christianity claims control over the individual thought and life, and therefore is tyrannical, and to be resisted. But it excites a feeling of wonder, when, a moment later, in a definition, from the same source, of free religion, we are told that it too, when fully developed, "will claim absolute control over the collective life of society and inward life of the individual." Free religion, then, is to be as much a master as Christianity is: it will demand as complete submission. Social and individual life are to be absolutely controlled by it. Wherein, then, is the great difference? Certainly not in that the doctrines of Christianity are false, while those of free religion are true; for, according to the same authority, the free-religious doctrines are as yet "very imperfectly developed." Nobody knows but that, when they are perfectly developed, they will exactly coincide with the doctrines of Christianity; for the number of those who, of their own free choice, have assented to the truth of the Christian system, is, to say the least, as great as the number of those who have, in the same manner, been led to pronounce any system of free religion to be true. The one party has just as much right as the other to

[4] Toledo Index, Jan. 14, 1871.

prophesy that its own tenets will ultimately be universally accepted. Wherein, then, is the great superiority of free religion? The writer who has been quoted evidently means to state it in the following sentence: "It will rest this claim" of absolute control "on the natural perception of truth by the universal reason of the race; that is, on the principle of human freedom." Over against "divine authority" is set "human freedom:" here is the grand distinction. But one or two questions are here suggested. Where is this "natural perception of truth," and what has it been doing for the last six thousand years, that it has made so little progress? And, if the new system is to claim "absolute control," of what advantage is the "human freedom"? If I voluntarily allow myself to be imprisoned, am I less imprisoned than if I am forced into prison? Besides, suppose it should be said (as in truth it may be said) that Christianity, too, rests its claim to absolute control no less on the principle of human freedom than the system of free religion does; no one is truly a Christian who is not one freely. Where, then, after all, is the great advantage of free religion? Is it, that, in Christianity, divine authority comes in as claiming control? But suppose that, when "the natural perception of truth" becomes fully developed, it should lead men to believe that there *is* a divine authority, and that they ought to submit to it. Is there any more authority in this case than when men are led freely to accept and obey the principles laid down by Thomas Paine, Theodore Parker, or David F. Strauss? Is not divine authority at least as good as human? Does not everybody know that at least

nine-tenths of those who profess to be free-religionists have been made what they are, not by their independent reflections, but by the addresses, tracts, books, and newspapers, in which the comparatively few of the leaders in the movement publish their opinions? We do not complain of this effort to quicken "the natural perception of truth;" but why should they complain of tyranny and bigotry, when leaders in the Christian Church do the same, and convince men that the sentiments and precepts put forth by Jesus Christ are worthy of universal acceptance, and that Jesus himself deserves supreme trust and homage?

The truth is, this inveighing against authority in matters of religion grows out of a very narrow and one-sided view of man: it ignores one of the best instincts of humanity. Men are fitted and obliged to live under authority. The child must be subject to the parent; the citizen must be subject to the state. He who submits most cheerfully to these necessary restraints of society shows the most manliness. Or, if the laws of the household and of the state are sometimes with reason felt to be unjust, the difficulty is not in our relation to the laws, but in the laws themselves. The legitimate inference is, not that government, as such, is iniquitous, but that human government is imperfect. If we could find some one who would be to us what the instincts of the child lead him to expect and desire a father or mother to be, — some one whose opinion is worthy to be law, whose love is worthy of a life-long devotion, — we should be doing violence to ourselves if we should refuse to yield to him our allegiance. What means the universal tendency to form parties founded on

adherence to this or that eminent man? What is the secret of the hero-worship to which all are more or less inclined? Whence comes the magic power, on the field of battle, of a great general leading his forces to the attack? It comes from the fitness of personal character to win enthusiasm and service by its inherent worth; it comes from the natural craving for concrete, rather than abstract, models of worthy living. Virtue, to be understood, must be seen as actual. Mere ideas of excellence, clothed in words ever so elegant and eloquent, are cold and powerless compared with the incarnate virtues of a living man. There is no virtue except as there are virtuous beings. To be impressed by it, we need to see it; as much as, in order to be impressed by a beautiful landscape, we need to look at an actual one, not merely imagine an ideal one. What men need, then, is, not that this instinct be crushed, but that it be rightly directed. If this craving for a model of holy character can be met by presenting it with a worthy object; if all that can be conceived of purity, benevolence, loveliness, and grandeur in moral character, can be found concentrated in a human, intelligible being; if this being is seen to be connected with us by ties akin to those which bind us to father and mother, sister and brother; if, instead of following a vague, abstract, ideal, self-imposed rule of action, we follow one which is presented in a concrete form in this personal embodiment of all that is excellent in thought and in character; if those who are enslaved by the power of sin can be made to feel the personal sympathy and helpful stimulus of one who does not scorn them for their guilt, but pours on them the whole wealth

of affection which a superior though sinless heart can bestow, — then we should have just what the exigencies of humanity seem most to require. And this is what Christianity presents, when it gives to us Jesus Christ as a model, as an authority, and as a Saviour. In him "the natural perception of truth" can detect that perfect revelation of divine truth, that manifestation of God himself, for which the race has always been longing. In his life

> "The law appears
> Drawn out in living characters."

The great power of Christianity consists in the fact that it is regarded as a historical phenomenon; as not the product of imagination, the idea of some philosopher, nor even the complex of the ideas of philosophers, but as an objective fact, which mere idealizing thought can neither produce nor nullify. The power of it, in short, is, and always will be, found in the fact, that it *is* an *authority*, — something which can be relied on as fixed, incapable of being overturned by the changing theories of changing generations.

3. But it is objected, once more, that a supernatural revelation is impracticable. In its baldest form, the objection is thus stated by a German:[5] "Looked at from the human point of view, an immediate divine revelation is an impossibility; for, if the divine Spirit works immediately upon the human, the activity of the latter is suspended, and the human spirit can be only receptive and passive. . . . This, however, in-

[5] D. F. Strauss, *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, dargestellt von Philalethus, p. 148.

volves a self-contradiction." The difficulty with the doctrine of revelation, as it is here stated, is evidently a manufactured one. How does it appear, that, when God makes a communication to men, human activity is suspended, any more than when men make communications to one another? Where, then, is the self-contradiction? It is more plausible when Theodore Parker says, "It seems difficult to conceive any reason why moral and religious truth should rest for their support on the personal authority of their revealer, any more than the truths of science on that of him who makes them known first or most clearly. . . . The authority of Jesus, one would naturally think, must rest on the truth of his words, and not their truth on his authority."[6] That is, the claim of the words of a man, or of a book, to be authoritative, must be tested by each man's own spiritual sense. Whether we regard the words as a revelation from God, must depend, therefore, on whether they seem to us worthy to be such a revelation. If, however, we are competent to tell what a revelation ought to be, then nothing can really be a revelation to us.

But this objection involves two radical mistakes: (1.) It is not true, as is here implied, that the power to detect a divine revelation is equivalent to the power to make one. The capacity to judge of a truth is not identical with a capacity to discover the truth. Our intuitive conviction of the correctness of the demonstrations of Euclid does not involve the ability of ourselves to originate them. Our certainty that those are right who tell us that the earth is round does not prove, that, without instruction, we could learn

[6] Works, vol. viii. p. 14.

that it is round. (2.) The other mistake involved in this objection is, that it incorrectly assumes natural religion to be, in each individual, an independent product of immediate intuition. Or, to put it in the language of Mr. Newman, "Of our moral and spiritual God we know nothing without, every thing within."[7] The best reply to this is a direct contradiction. The obvious fact is, that no man ever got his knowledge of God and spiritual things by his own reflections. Every man receives his first distinct impressions of these things, as even of almost all things, from his elders. They do not come from within, but from without. Whether a man, left with no instruction in religious subjects, would of himself ever come to a notion of God, we cannot tell; nor is it, for our purpose, of any consequence to know. We do know that such an experiment cannot be tried. Every man's life is intertwined with that of others, and then most inextricably, when he is getting his first impressions of God and of his own conscious and responsible soul. Those impressions are made so early in life, that few can remember when or how they were first received. But we know, from what we see daily occurring, that every child's religious faith is an imparted faith. His God is the being whom he hears told of by his father and mother, his sister and brother, his teacher and associate. If, when the child grows older, he begins to reflect on these things, and to speculate concerning the nature and attributes of God; if, in his maturer years, he even breaks loose from the faith of his fathers, and believes in a different God, — still we must say, not that he has wrought

[7] Phases of Faith, p. 152.

out an independent knowledge of God, but that he has changed his view of the God made known to him by others. Therefore, whatever result he may have arrived at by his own meditation, he cannot call it his own in any exclusive sense: for the very basis of all his reasoning, the first positive contents of his material for reflection, were given him by others; and his later speculations, too, have been determined by his contact with other minds. No one, in any thing, can claim perfect originality. In thought and in feeling, no man is an isolated individual. Each man receives and gives. Books multiply this interaction of minds and hearts: so that the intellectual, moral, and religious world is as really a unit as is the physical and material. Though each individual may, through his own activity, contribute something to the fashioning of religious thought, yet the material on which he works is given him. At the best, he only adds a stone or two to the building whose fashion was fixed, and whose foundation was laid, far back in the immemorial past. Religious faith, then, is not a product of individual intuition, but is something communicated from generation to generation.

If, now, the question is raised, from what source the first man received his religion, we must answer, that, aside from such testimony as is not admitted by unbelievers in the Bible, only so much can be certainly known, — he could not have received it as men in general now receive it; it could not have been imparted by other men: it must, therefore, have come either as an intuition, or as a direct revelation from God. All analogy fails us here; but, so far as it does aid us, it favors the theory that a knowledge

of God was first acquired through a supernatural revelation, rather than through unaided intuition; for that is at least like the actual method, in that the knowledge comes by impartation. The only difference is in the person from whom it comes; whereas for the theory, that the first man learned about God without any external aid, there is no analogy whatever. What is the probability of the case? Whatever theory of the origin of mankind we adopt, the fact remains, that the knowledge of God, once acquired, has been continued by means of personal communication. Even if we suppose (and this is a supposition which the disbeliever in revelation will be the last to make) that the first man who obtained a conception of God had a religious sense entirely different from that of his descendants, and superior to it, still, if he got this conception without external assistance, it must, at the best, have been only a guess; for if it was more than that, if it was such a presentation to his mind of the knowledge of God as made him immediately certain that God was an objective being, then that was a supernatural revelation. If, now, there was a God when man first began his career, a God who loved man, and wished to be known by him; if he made man adapted to receive a knowledge of himself through personal communication, — is it probable that the first man, from whom was to descend all that knowledge, was left only to conjecture a divine existence? Is it probable that all the knowledge of God which his descendants have ever had has been his guess, transmitted, modified, corrupted, and infinitely diversified? Is it not probable, rather, that the aboriginal man had a communication directly from God,

corresponding in clearness, while superior in correctness, to the instruction in religion which is now given by one generation to the succeeding? To ask the question is to answer it, unless, indeed, at the outset we beg the question in dispute, and assume the absolute impossibility of a divine revelation; unless we deny the personality and the power of God; unless we assume that God is the product of religious thought, rather than the author of it.

True, this is only *a priori* reasoning. The historical testimony, if it were positive on the other side, would overthrow our conclusion. But it is not on that side: on the contrary, so far as it goes, it confirms the theory which we have found to be antecedently probable. To say nothing of the Bible, the traditions of the nations all coincide in deriving the knowledge of God from a primitive revelation. When the Hindu mythology makes the first men a race of gods, and holds to the perfect inspiration of the Vedas;[8] when the Buddha, notwithstanding his own apparent atheism, is himself by his followers glorified as "the absolute Buddha, . . . the god of happy exit," as having "acquired all knowledge regarding this world and the next;"[9] when the Egyptian Osiris is conceived as uniting in himself a divine and a human nature,[10] and the Egyptian kings are described as first gods, then demi-gods, and finally men;[11] when the Greek looked back on a period in which men and

[8] Rhode, *Religion und Philosophie der Hindus*, p. 404; Max Müller, Chips from a German Workshop, vol. i. p. 17.

[9] Max Müller, ibid., p. 204.

[10] Sharpe, Egyptian Mythology, pp. 9, 10.

[11] Hardwick, Christ and other Masters, iv. p. 13.

gods had intimate intercourse with one another;[12] when the Roman told of Numa Pompilius inspired by the nymph Ægeria;[13] when the Zoroastrian appeals to the Zendavesta, and the Mohammedan to the Koran, as divinely inspired, — in all this we see the uniform tendency of men to trace back their religion to a period when the race derived a knowledge of religious truth directly and infallibly from the Deity. Whatever may be thought as to the truth of these legends, yet the argument remains the same: the phenomenon before us proves it to be an instinct of the race to desire an infallible, objective revelation, and to believe that such a one has been made. It shows that men generally have looked, for a full manifestation of God, not so much to a gradual and general advance of religious thought, to be completed in an indefinite future, as to a limited, special revelation, made in a definite past.

The objections to the credibility of a supernatural revelation, therefore, so far from being conclusive, have led us rather to affirm it. We have found that an authoritative revelation is needed; that such a revelation, if given, would not fetter, but rather aid and stimulate, men in their efforts to attain the highest standard in spiritual life; and that the manner in which men now obtain their knowledge of religious truth creates a presumption, that, at least in the beginning of human history, such a revelation was made. The way is now prepared for a second question.

II. Is it a fact that a supernatural revelation has been made? To this question there is at least a pre-

[12] Nägelsbach, *Homerische Theologie*, p. 151. [13] Livy, i. 18.

sumption in favor of an affirmative answer. We may now assume that it is not candid or scientific to foreclose all investigation of the merits of any alleged revelation by denying the possibility of God's making one. In view of the antecedent probability and the general tradition and belief of a supernatural revelation, the only impartial attitude which can be assumed towards pretended revelations is, to be willing to examine their claims, and that not with the prejudgment that all of them must be false, but that some of them are likely to be true. Accordingly, in pursuing this inquiry, we remark, —

1. That no valid reason for denying that a supernatural revelation has been made is furnished by the fact that there are many pretended revelations. What is most prized is most apt to be counterfeited. The fact that men have desired and expected an authoritative message from God would itself lead us to anticipate that misdirected efforts would be made to satisfy that desire. Nevertheless, the fact that spurious or imperfect forms of religion are current is made by many a pretext for questioning the genuineness of all. Here are, it is said, besides Christianity, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, the religions of China, of ancient Egypt, Greece, Judæa, and Rome, — these and many more, all claiming to be the truth, the most of them claiming to have been divinely instituted. They are certainly not all infallible and supernatural: is it not, then, reasonable to conclude that none of them are? They are all attempts to fathom the ocean of divine truth: shall we not say of them, that, while some or all are praiseworthy attempts, yet none are absolutely trustworthy?

Certainly not, unless we assume at the outset that the thing counterfeited has and can have no counterpart in reality; whereas, on the contrary, we have found that there is a presumption that God has made a revelation. The question is forced upon us: If God has wished to reveal himself supernaturally, has his desire been frustrated beyond remedy by the counterfeit revelations which are put forth in his name? If so, then it may well be said that *he* is "the veriest wretch in creation;" for it would be implied that the feeble, blundering, abortive endeavors of men to find out God have prevented him from showing himself at all; that, because men have tried by their own power to learn about him, therefore he cannot tell them about himself. In other words, the very desire and aptitude of men to receive an authoritative communication of divine truth, according to this view, stand in the way of God's making it. This, however, is preposterous. But we remark, further, —

2. That no valid reason for denying that a supernatural revelation has been made can be found in the want of an infallible criterion by which to detect it. It seems plausible to say, that, if God has taken pains to reveal himself authoritatively, he must have taken equal pains to make the revelation clearly recognizable; otherwise he would seem to have frustrated his own endeavors.

But (1) such a criterion as would make it absolutely impossible for any individual to err in his judgment respecting a divine revelation cannot exist without an absolutely unmistakable and infallible revelation made directly to every man; that is, the means of detecting a revelation would be itself a reve-

lation, and there would be no need of a special revelation to which the criterion should be applied. If every man had such a faculty, that faculty would be a part of his natural endowment; inspiration would be universal; and a supernatural revelation would be superfluous. Such a universal revelation may seem to be desirable; but it certainly is not actual: and the question is, whether the want of it proves that God has not made *any* revelation. And the answer must be, Certainly not. Even though God had been remiss in not providing for the sure recognition of his messages, that would not prove that he had made none. It would be better to have something, even though it may be misunderstood, than to have nothing. Again, it must be observed (2), that, though men are not absolutely precluded from making mistakes, yet they are not for that reason to be regarded as totally incapable of distinguishing genuine from spurious revelations. As has been already remarked, the power to judge of a truth is not the same as the power to originate it. All men have more or less of ability to test the claims of one who professes to be a special revealer of divine truth. Some are better qualified for this than others are. But the same thing which disqualifies a man for this task would also disqualify him for receiving, without the intervention of a miracle, a direct revelation. Furthermore (3), in leaving his supernatural revelations to be communicated from one to another, and thus to be exposed to the possibility of misconception and unbelief, God only does the same that he does respecting all other knowledge. He communicates nothing to men, as a general rule, without the use of interme-

diate agencies. Information respecting the most necessary things is to be obtained only through other men. We are constantly exposed to deception in regard even to that which we most desire to know. Whether or not God might have imparted all knowledge to us directly, he certainly has not chosen to do so. At the same time, no one can learn without the special activity of his own powers. Every man must observe, and think, and compare for himself. If God, then, has made special revelations of himself to a few men, he would be acting in perfect conformity with the usual order of things if he leaves it with men in general to become acquainted with those revelations by means of oral or written tradition. Whether there is a supernatural revelation or not, men have to discriminate between different religions. More or less intelligently, every one makes his choice. He may take his religion unmodified from his instructors; or he may be led to modify it by his study of books, or by his wider acquaintance with men; or he may absorb almost unconsciously the spirit of belief or unbelief which prevails around him: still he makes his discrimination and his election. Suppose, now, that God has made special revelations of himself; suppose, too, that of these revelations he has provided that a written record should be made, in order that they may be more perfectly preserved: would he thus be imposing on us any other or any heavier burden than we have to bear already? Would he thus be making man "the veriest wretch in creation"?

There is, then, no valid reason for doubting that a revelation has been made. We have every reason to expect to find one somewhere. Religions claiming

to be divinely given are thrust upon us everywhere. We cannot avoid answering the question, Which is the true one? As to this point, it is not necessary minutely to examine all the various claims. Here and now it will hardly be deemed presumption by any, when we affirm, —

3. That, if a supernatural revelation has been made, the claim of Christianity to be such a revelation is better attested than that of any other. In view of what we have found to be the probabilities of the case, it is, to say the least, hardly ingenuous, in passing judgment on the merits of Christianity, to assume at the outset, as many deistical writers do, that it cannot be a special revelation, and that therefore every thing excellent in the doctrines of Jesus is a product of the natural man, of the common inspiration of the race. This is, in fact, a clear begging of the question, until the impossibility of a supernatural revelation has been proved. The unfairness in this particular becomes the more evident when we see how it leads to unfairness in another. In order to make good the claim that Christianity is nothing but one phase of natural religion, such a definition of it is given as to eliminate from it all which may not in some form be derived from other sources. Thus Mr. Parker says, "Christianity is a simple thing, — very simple. It is absolute, pure morality; the love of man, the love of God, acting without let or hinderance. The only creed it lays down is the great truth which springs up spontaneous in the holy heart, — there is a God." [14] It is easy to say this, and to say that this simple doctrine is nothing but natural

[14] Works, vol. viii. p 22.

religion: but the difficulty is, first, that this is *not* the only creed which Christianity lays down; and, next, that from beginning to end Jesus claims to reveal something more than natural religion. Turn and twist the matter as we may, the only alternative in the case is to assume either the supernaturalness or the falsity of the claims of the religion of Jesus Christ. For it belongs to the essence of Christianity, that in it Jesus sets himself up as being what Mr. Parker and his followers stoutly declare that no one can be; viz., an authority to be unqualifiedly trusted as divinely inspired. The simple question is, whether this is a false claim.

It is at this point that we see the immense importance of deciding where the burden of proof lies. It is only on the assumption of the impossibility or extreme improbability of a supernatural revelation that any candid inquirer would be disposed to dispute the claim of Christianity to be such. If one were looking for a revelator, anxious and expecting to find him somewhere, he would assuredly find him in Jesus. No better proof of this could be given than the fact that even those who disbelieve in a special revelation, who, therefore, contradict Jesus himself in the claims which he made, yet accord to him a pre-eminent place among the religious teachers of the world. They resort to any and every theory of his life and work, rather than accuse him of the imposture or the self-delusion which consistency would require them to charge upon him. The coryphæi of modern rationalism, in their attempts to prove the life of Christ to have been a natural product of human development, do not pretend that it *seems* to

have been such, but that it *must* have been such. Therefore they distort and explain away what, upon a different view of revelation, is all perfectly in place. With those who take this irrational position, believers in a revelation cannot come to an understanding, and need have no controversy. To others, the argument for Christianity as a divine revelation may be very briefly given: (1.) Christianity satisfies the natural and general desire for an *authoritative* revelation of the divine will. (2.) It satisfies the natural and general desire for a well-attested, concrete, *historical* revelation of the divine will. (3.) It satisfies the natural and general desire for a *redemptive* revelation of the divine will. They who will not acknowledge any one, not even God, to be their master; they who have more confidence in their individual opinion of what ought to be than in the most overwhelming evidence of what has been; they who have no sense of guilt, and feel no need of being reconciled to God, — these cannot be convinced of the truth of Christianity; they cannot even understand it. Christianity has no intelligible language for them; for Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost." For others, the argument is clear and conclusive: internal and external evidence coincide to prove Jesus to be the Light of the world.

There has, then, been a supernatural revelation. We find the fact most clearly proved in the institution and progress of Christianity. But the religion of Jesus Christ is comparatively modern. While for this reason the evidence of its divine origin is the more easily found, yet, inasmuch as the occasion for a revelation existed from the first, we are driven to inquire, —

III. Was a supernatural revelation made to primitive man? We have already found strong reason for presuming one to have been made. It is not probable that God left his offspring at the outset to grope after him uncertainly. We should therefore expect that that which is made probable by an *a priori* view of the case, and which is confirmed by the uniform traditions of men, would be raised to certainty by the testimony of any revelation admitted to be divine. We should expect to find, as one of the marks of the divinity of such a revelation, that it does not claim to be the first and only communication from God, but rather the continuation and completion of one already made to primeval man. We should expect it to assert no more for itself than that it is the ripe fruit of a tree whose roots reach down to the earliest history of the human race. We should expect that Christ would assert himself to be only one, though the chief one, in a series of divinely-commissioned messengers; and his gospel to be one, though the chief one, of the supernaturally-delivered communications from God. And this is just what we find to be the fact. If Jesus declared himself to be the Redeemer of the world, he no less clearly declared himself to be the Messiah looked for by the Jews; and he declared Abraham, Moses, and the prophets to be forerunners of him, proclaiming the same essential truths, and sent by the same God.

It is a very familiar thought among believers in the Bible, that one mind and one plan run through the whole. And yet perhaps the full significance of this is not always taken in. Arguments for the existence of God are so often drawn from the universal belief

in a divine existence, that we sometimes forget to distinguish between the conception of *a* God and a knowledge of *the* God. We forget that *knowledge* of God can come only from an authentic communication from him, not from abstract reasoning about him. The God whose existence is only guessed at or reasoned out can be only the reflex of the mind which guesses or reasons. How, then, can there have been preserved among men a knowledge of the one God? Only through a personal intercourse with him, — an intercourse so palpable and mutual as to be unmistakable, and either vouchsafed to every generation and every race of men, or vouchsafed to a few, and through them communicated to others. It does not follow from this that there can be now no real intercourse between men and God but such as is exceptional and supernatural; but it does follow that, without such authentic preservation of a revealed knowledge of God, men would lose that knowledge, and worship, as many do, not the true God, but gods of their own imagination. Nor does it follow that men have not a natural tendency to believe in a God, any more than that men have not a natural tendency to relish food: but it does follow that they will be likely, if left without correct information, to believe in a false rather than a true God; just as the natural craving for nutriment, if not satisfied by wholesome food, will try to sate itself on what is unsavory and hurtful. Since, then, in point of fact, all current views of God are such as are handed down from one generation to another, it is of the utmost importance that the sources of the knowledge of him be kept uncorrupted.

Here, then, we see the significance to us of the book of Genesis. It is the record of God's primeval revelation of himself to man. Notice, I say it is the *record* of a revelation, not the revelation itself. Revelation is a supernatural act of God in personal intercourse with men. The books of the Bible contain a history of this revelation, — a history of its forms, its occasions, its process, and its results. They are a revelation to us only in a secondary and mediate sense, — in the same sense as an oral transmission of that original act of revelation would have been. The chief importance of the books of Scripture does not lie in the fact that the writers of them were inspired, but in that the things which are written were worthy of an inspired record. The argument for the inspiration of the Scriptures is not to be derived so much from direct testimony to that effect, whether of the writers themselves or of others, as from the necessity which there was that a revelation which was designed for the benefit of the world should be preserved in a pure and trustworthy form. Every description of the difficulty of securing an accurate account even of passing events; every emphasis laid upon the certainty that any narrative, when passing from lip to lip and from age to age, will become distorted, until at last it loses its own identity, — every argument of this kind which is urged against the theory of inspiration is an argument in favor of it to one who believes in the fact of a supernatural revelation. We may unwisely and ignorantly dispute about the nature and the degree of inspiration; we may lay undue stress upon it: but that God, if he has taken pains peculiarly to reveal himself to a few

of his creatures for the benefit of the race, should take no pains to secure a trustworthy record of the revelation, is beyond belief. Collateral arguments, internal evidence, biblical testimony, — these may be urged afterwards: but they lose much of their force, and, for most minds, all-convincing force, unless there is antecedently a conviction that a revelation of God has been made; to preserve which, inspiration was needed.

The book of Genesis, then, is the inspired history of God's primitive intercourse with men. It tells us of the first link in the chain of divine self-manifestations which ended in the coming of Jesus Christ, whom those who have seen have seen the Father himself.

The question concerning the authorship of this book is, accordingly, a subordinate question. The dissecting process to which it has been fashionable to subject it, especially since the days of DeWette, even if the dissectors had come to a uniform result, would not need much to disturb us. For the evidences of a post-Mosaic origin of the book are still, for the most part, purely subjective. The plausible indications of a late origin are confined to extremely few passages, which may be later additions, and, if so, do not invalidate the Mosaic authorship. The theory of a double or triple or still more various authorship, even if established, proves the existence of documents written before Moses, as much as that the composition of the book was of a later date. Even the most unscrupulous and arbitrary of the anatomists of the Pentateuch[15] allows at least the four-

[15] Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. i. pp. 73, 401, 410.

teenth chapter of Genesis to be of an ante-Mosaic date, and that on the strength of a critical feeling which, with as good right, we can apply to other sections as well. There is, therefore, not much reason yet for alarm lest the book shall be proved to have been the capricious invention of a later age than that of Moses. But, even if it were demonstrated that Moses had nothing to do with it, the value of the book would not thereby be necessarily impaired; for its value does not depend on who wrote it, or even when it was written, but upon the acts of revelation which it records. These acts, if they took place at all, took place before the time of Moses, and were forerunners of his own mission.

The question concerning the relation of Genesis to natural science is also one of subordinate importance. The volumes written on this topic make an extended discussion of it superfluous here. It is enough to bear in mind, first, that the correspondences between Genesis and the sure results of natural science are more striking than the discrepancies; secondly, that the inferences respecting the past history of the world, drawn by naturalists from present phenomena, are always to be carefully distinguished from established facts; and, thirdly, that the significance of the book to us does not hinge at all upon its accuracy in regard to what, for its purpose, is of entirely incidental consequence. What the book professes to give, and what its chief value consists in, is its record of God's acts of revelation; and these no explorations of science can ever disturb.

In short, the book of Genesis (and this cannot be too much insisted on), like every other book, should

be judged chiefly in reference to what it professes to be. It does not come to us heralding its claim to having been composed at such a time or by such a man. It does not come to us claiming to be an authority in matters of natural or profane history. It does come to us as a record of events through which God made men acquainted with himself and with his principles of government. It posseses this character, not only by virtue of what it itself claims to be, but by virtue of the connection of the events narrated in it with the whole train of events which signalized the history of the Jewish nation, and culminated in the life and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus gave himself out to be the completion of the divine economy exhibited in the lives and sayings of the kings, priests, and prophets of the Jewish people. The Jewish people, in their imposing ritual and their civil law, professed to be following the divine directions given to Moses. Moses, in undertaking to deliver the Israelites from bondage, and to give them a religious and civil code of laws, professed to be merely an agent in fulfilling the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Abraham appears before us as almost alone maintaining the worship of the one God, Jehovah, who had saved Noah from the flood; Noah, again, as almost alone faithful to the same God who had created the world. The history recorded in the book of Genesis is presupposed in all the subsequent revelations of God to men. One idea runs through the whole, — the maintenance in the world of a knowledge and worship of the true God.

This idea, then, is the key-note of the book of Genesis. The idea is confessedly grand: it is carried out

with unostentatious simplicity. Is it only an idea? or is it also history? It is much to say in favor of the historical character of the book, that the genuine revelation of God which was made in Jesus Christ was historically connected with the earlier revelations which had been made to men. That a revelation had been made to the early ancestors of the Jews is rendered probable, aside from their writings, by the pure and rigid monotheism which always characterized them, and for the human origin of which, outside of themselves, even the stoutest rationalism can give no explanation,[16] unless by the invention of a monotheistic instinct which is gratuitously ascribed to the Jews.[17] The leading of a special Providence in the Jewish nation is almost demonstrated by the fact, that notwithstanding the well-nigh universal apostasy into which they sometimes fell, and the ungodliness which has always disgraced them, they yet preserved with jealous care the books, and only the books, which contain their religious law, the religious meditations and homilies of their teachers, together with the story of their own disobedience and disgrace. This might be enough; but we have more. The books of the Old Testament, as historical works, vouched for by tradition, are as well authenticated as any of the works of ancient times. And what is true of the Old Testament in general is true of Genesis in particular. It is historic in its claims, and historic in its whole tone and spirit. The personages described in it are entirely, intensely,

[16] See, e.g., Vatke, *Religion des Alten Testaments*, p. 700.

[17] On this point, see Max Müller's masterly refutation of Renan's theory of Shemitic Monotheism, Chips, vol. 1.

human. Unlike the early history of most peoples, it has no stories of ancestral heroes and demi-gods.[18] It does not aim to amuse or startle by stories of marvellous things. The miraculous element, prominent as it is, is subordinate and tributary to the main design; which is, to exhibit the history of men in their relation to the divine government. And the most marvellous thing in the book, the narrative of the deluge, — a narrative which, if found only here, would doubtless be laughed to scorn by the votaries of naturalism, as it indeed is by many of the coarser among them, — has to be admitted to be substantially historical even by the most unwilling critics, on account of the overwhelming evidence to that effect which comes from the concurrent traditions of all nations.[19] The book has none of the characteristics of heathen mythology, except this, that a closer relation of man to God is described than is common among men in general. Why this is the case we have already seen. And, in the very difference connected with this resemblance, we find a new mark of the peculiar trustworthiness of the book of Genesis. For the intercourse of the patriarchs with God has everywhere, unlike that of the heathen heroes with the gods, a rigidly ethico-religious meaning and les-

[18] Unless the narrative in Gen. vi. 1–4 is akin to this, the "mighty men" being offspring of fallen angels and women. But, if so, it is noticeable that these heroes are not glorified as the ancestors of the Jews: on the contrary, the generation of this progeny is rather adduced as the special reason why God found it necessary to destroy the race by a flood. — See Delitzsch, *Commentar über die Genesis*, p. 230 seq.; and especially Kurtz, *Die Ehen der Söhne Gottes mit den Töchtern der Menschen*.

[19] Cf. Knobel, *Die Genesis erklärt*, p. 75; Delitzsch, *Com. über die Genesis*, p. 242 seq. And the Chinese and Egyptians are not to be excepted, as Hedge affirms, Primeval World of Hebrew Tradition, p. 195. — See the above, and Gützlaff, *Geschichte des Chinesischen Reichs*, p. 26 seq.; Diodorus Siculus, 1, 10.

son; while the characters of these men, faithfully portrayed in their weakness and sinfulness, and the details of private life, given with inimitable simplicity and naturalness, prove the narrator to be drawing no imaginative picture.

When, therefore, the narratives of this book are summarily relegated to the region of myths, simply because heathen nations have generally had their mythologies;[20] when it is quietly assumed that the book gives us, instead of history, only the mature though imaginative result of Hebrew speculations concerning the primeval world;[21] when, at the best, the events narrated are allowed only to have a faint element of truth, thickly overlaid by the legendary accumulations of centuries of capricious tradition, — then our reply is, that the Hebrew book of first things is utterly different in essential character from the myths and legends of other nations. There is here none of that personification of the powers of Nature which forms so vital a part of heathen mythologies: there can be traced none of that mythopœic process, so graphically described by Max Müller,[22] by which a people, through the obsolescence of the meanings of words, come unconsciously to transform things into personal beings. There is here everywhere a sober, pragmatic, religious spirit, such as is utterly foreign to the Greek and Roman legends of their gods and heroes. The marks of myths, then, we say, are wanting here. But, we are told, a myth is a story constructed as a vehicle for an idea.[23] In the Hebrew

[20] J. L. George, *Mythus und Sage*, p. 27 seq.
[21] Hedge, Primeval World, pp. 3, 69, 102.
[22] Chips, vol. ii. p. 167, London ed.
[23] J. L. George, *Mythus und Sage*, p. 15.

account of the creation, of the fall, of the confusion of tongues, and of the origin of the Jewish nation, we see evident attempts to clothe ideas respecting the causes of existing things in the garb of historic facts; therefore these stories are myths. Indeed! according to this, what important historic event would not be a myth? The past decade would have to be pronounced one of the most mythical in all time. Because a myth is an idea which has invented for itself a historical setting, does it follow that every historical narrative which is also ideal is a myth? Because all oaks are trees, does it follow that all trees are oaks? And yet we are gravely told, in one of the most recent German works on the history of the Jews, that a certain incident in the life of Reuben [24] is to be regarded as "an actual event, *because* not adapted to have reference to the nation as a whole, nor to involve any other far-reaching significance." [25] In other words, the more insignificant a narrative is, the more likely is it to be true. Away with such absurdity! Let it be granted that myths are most apt to have reference to the important questions which arise concerning the beginnings of things; yet does it follow that whatever has to do with such questions is mythical? Does it follow, because men, in these speculations concerning past events, make wild conjectures and invent fantastic stories, that there were no past

[24] Gen. xxxv. 22.

[25] Hitzig, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, i. p. 47. Scarcely less preposterous are the speculations of Ewald, *Geschichte*, p. 355 seq., who finds in the list of the descendants of Cain and of Seth, Gen. ch. iv. and v., names of demigods and gods. Thus Enoch means "consecrator," i.e. "beginner" (!); and, as he lived 365 years, it is evident (there being 365 days in a year) that Enoch was the god of the new year!

facts at all? Was there no beginning of the world, of the human race, of sin, of language? Because many peoples have incredible notions respecting these things, does it follow that there can be no true account of them?

But it is observed that some of the stories in the book of Genesis more or less closely resemble those which are found in the writings of other nations of antiquity. The Mosaic account of the creation has its parallel, more or less striking, in the Etruscan, Babylonian, Phœnician, and other heathen cosmogonies.[26] The tree of life,[27] the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,[28] the four rivers of paradise,[29] the fall of man,[30] the part played in this event by the serpent,[31] the deluge,[32] the confusion of tongues,[33] — all these and other features of the Hebrew history have their counterparts in the legends of other nations. But what shall be the inference? Not that the Hebrew stories are derived from the others: of this there is not the slightest external evidence; and the internal evidence is decidedly the other way, inasmuch as the stories appear in their simplest and least objectionable form in the Hebrew book. Not necessarily, either, that the other nations derived the stories from the Jewish books; for the evidence here, too, is imperfect. Not that, because the stories vary so widely from one

[26] See the references in Lange's Genesis, Schaff's ed., p. 181.

[27] Sharpe, Egyptian Mythology, p. 20; Richter, *Phantasien des Alterthums*, p. 83; Hardwick, ibid., ii. p. 133.

[28] Hardwick, ibid., p. 138.

[29] Ibid., p. 133.

[30] Ibid., p. 137, iv. p. 193 seq.; Delitzsch, Genesis, p. 169.

[31] Delitzsch, ibid.; Sharpe, ibid., p. 45; Hardwick, ibid., iii. p. 144 seq.

[32] See p. 77.

[33] Rawlinson, Bampton Lectures for 1859, p. 67.

another, therefore they are all fictitious; unless we are ready to adopt what Tholuck calls the Castor-and-Pollux principle of criticism, that, when two accounts of the same event disagree, both must be false. No: the more resemblances there are found between the Hebrew and other sacred narratives concerning the creation and the early history of man, the more probable does it become, not that all are false, nor that any of these books is the parent of all the others, but rather that all of them together are derived from primeval knowledge and a traditional account of facts, the accounts becoming more or less corrupted according as they are removed from the original sources of information and from the special guidance of the Spirit of God.

Now, even if we placed no stress upon the connection of the events recorded in Genesis with the subsequent acts of God in revelation and redemption, still the book would stand forth challenging peculiar admiration. Over against the confused, fantastic, polytheistic, or pantheistic conceptions which other cosmogonies present concerning the origin of the world, the Hebrew historian tells us of a creation made by the one personal God, with intelligent purpose, — an account at once simple and sublime, philosophic and religious. Ages before the brotherhood of man and a history of the whole race were dreamed of elsewhere, the Hebrew historian, in his opening chapters, had sketched in bold outline the beginnings of a universal history, deriving all the races of men from one pair, making all history a plan of God, and pointing forward to a re-union of all men in one common bond of religious life. He laid down the law of mar-

riage according to its true, ideal character, as a divine institution; a sacred, inviolable union of one man with one woman, — a conception of marriage worthy to be indorsed, as it was, by Jesus himself, and startling us by its contrast with the practice of heathendom, with the practice even of Judaism, and by its still greater contrast with the swinish notions of marriage which, under the thin pretext of spiritual affinity, are to some extent forcing their way into practice even among us. He pictures to us primeval man, made in God's image, sustaining a childlike, intimate relation to God, and holding intercourse with him in a free and objective manner, such as alone was suited to one who could get a knowledge of God in no other way. He gives us an account of the beginning of human sin, which, in its substantial features, coincides with the soundest conclusions derived from observation and the moral sense, — an account which makes sin a free and culpable act, committed in violation of divine law. Yet, in the narrative of the consequent moral corruption of the race and its punishment by the flood, he recognizes the other great truth, that the oneness of the race embraces the moral as well as the physical constitution. He gives us a brief account of the dispersion of the descendants of Noah, — a sketch which has excited the admiration of critics for its comprehensiveness and accuracy.[34] He tells us of the original unity and subsequent confusion of tongues, — a narrative confirmed by Babylonian history, and coinciding with the most mature results of modern philology and ethnology.[35] And then, having drawn

[34] Knobel, *Völkertafel der Genesis*, Rawlinson, ibid., p. 68 seq.

[35] Rawlinson, p. 74 seq.; Max Müller, Science of Language, first series, p. 329 seq., Am. ed.; Zollmann, *Bibel und Natur*, p. 226 seq.

this general outline as a necessary introduction to his main object, he next gives us, with a marvellous mingling of generalities and details, that perennially instructive picture of the patriarchs, through whom the worship of the true God was preserved, and all the nations of the earth were ultimately to be blessed.

When now we find, in addition to these features which distinguish the book considered in itself and in contrast with all other ancient works, that this history is indissolubly connected with what follows; when we find that it furnishes the indispensable historical basis for that series of redemptive acts and revelations which culminated in the death and resurrection of Christ; when we find that the Christian system everywhere presupposes the facts recorded in the book of Genesis, — the essential oneness of all the races of men, the original moral integrity of man, his culpable and ruinous fall from that state, his consequent need of a remedial interposition of God, and the beginnings of this work of salvation in the Abrahamic dispensation; when we find Jesus Christ not only alluding to the events narrated in the book of Genesis merely as to something believed in by others, but recognizing them as an integral part of the divine plan of redemption which he had come to fulfil, — then we not only see that the book *is* wonderfully superior to any of the theosophies and cosmogonies of the heathen, but we understand *why* it is so: the hand of God was in it. He whose Son was slain from the foundation of the world planned all things from the foundation of the world with reference to that event, and provided that an imperishable

record of his plans should be made. There was the same reason for an authentic written account of the beginning of this work of redemption as for such an account of the completion of it. It might be said that no written history of redemption was absolutely necessary. For aught we know, the work of Jesus Christ might have proved efficacious for the salvation of men, even if there had been only an oral tradition of his words and deeds; for we are not saved by the history of Christ, but by Christ himself. But we do know that oral transmission soon becomes inaccurate: if an accurate knowledge of Christ was to be preserved without a constant miracle, it could not have been better done than by a written, unchanging history. Such a record was needed, to serve as a check upon the extravagances of tradition, to preserve pure the fountain of information, to serve as a standard by which to regulate the variations in religious life and opinion, to keep forever fresh the picture of Him who is the life of the world. But if there was needed such a history of Christ's part in the work of salvation, so, in its measure, of every part of that work. The work is one, and cannot be fully understood till all its parts are seen as they are, and seen together. As in Correggio's "Holy Night" the bright central light is the radiant form of the infant Saviour, while yet the effect of the picture is incomplete till we see the virgin mother with her attendants about him, and the angels above him, all reflecting his splendor; so, in the written picture of the work of salvation, the light which shines out of darkness beams from the face of Jesus Christ in his life, his death, his resurrection. We see him chiefly: without him, the pic-

ture has no meaning. Yet we do not truly comprehend it until we also see the patriarchs, prophets, kings, priests, and apostles, the primeval, heathen, Jewish, and Christian world, all grouped around him as their centre, enhancing, while they reflect, the lustre of Him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person."

II.

MOSES.

BY REV. J. P. THOMPSON, D.D., LL.D.

MY subject is prescribed; but it is almost without limit. I must, therefore, prescribe limits to myself; first by the law of courtesy, and next by the law of unity. The law of courtesy precludes me from considering Moses as an author; for the genuineness of the Pentateuch, and by implication its origin in the time of Moses, were treated in the preceding lecture. It precludes me from considering Moses as a legislator; for an analysis of the theocracy is reserved to one of my successors.[1] It precludes me also from considering Moses as a divine worker; since the question of miracles was discussed at length in last year's course.

Again: the law of unity directs me to adhere to some one leading topic under the comprehensive title of "Moses." I have chosen, accordingly, to speak of *Moses himself in his historic personality.* This is, in reality, the root of the whole question; for it is with Moses as with Christ, that if the person himself be

[1] The lecturer had recently given in Boston a course upon Egyptology, in which the laws of the Hebrews were compared with those of the Egyptians; and this was an additional reason for not enlarging upon the topic here.

identified as to time and place in the main features of his recorded life and character, the sayings and doings being fitted to such a character must be accepted almost as a matter of course. Moreover, modern scepticism makes personality its main point of attack. It seeks through the evolution and the correlation of physical forces to displace from the universe a personal God, and by the hypothesis of myths to displace from Christianity the personal Christ.

In arguing the personality of Moses, we start with every presumption in its favor: the burden of proof lies with the objector. The unvarying traditions of a nation concerning its founder — traditions embodied in its earliest records, and attested by monuments and institutions — carry with them a presumption of their substantial truth, unless inherent improbabilities, contradictory circumstances, or strongly exaggerated and unnatural features, awaken a suspicion of their mythical origin. All Egyptologists, for instance, now accept Menes as the first historical king of Egypt. Whether there was any historical ground for the preceding dynasties of "Gods, Heroes, and Manes," or these were altogether fabulous, remains to be determined; and so many legends had clustered about Menes himself, that scholars were once in doubt of his human personality. But the dry lists of Egyptian kings found upon monuments at Abydos and in the Turin papyrus, and the lists of Manetho and Eratosthenes compiled under every advantage from native sources, begin with the name of Menes. Herodotus, Diodorus, and all classical authors who have written upon Egypt, mention Menes as the founder of the empire: the history of Memphis was from the beginning identified

with his name; and the course of the great dike which he built to deflect the channel of the Nile, and protect the capital from overflow, may yet be traced in the dike of *Kosheish*. A long line of monuments, and the remains of gigantic works "which have left the stamp of grandeur on the Egyptian Empire," witness for the historical authenticity of a dynasty or an epoch, which, by the concurrent testimony of the royal lists, began with Menes. Without believing that Menes was once saved from drowning by a crocodile, and was finally carried out of the world by a hippopotamus,[2] we have solid grounds for accepting Menes as the founder of the empire, who "condensed within one focus the elements of civilization which were dispersed among the different Egyptian provinces."[3]

But how much stronger is the ground on which rests the historic personality of Moses as the founder of the Jewish nation! The old Jewish proverb, "When the tale of bricks is doubled, then comes Moses," is one of those sayings, which, embedded in the popular language of a nation, spring from its life-roots. His name was identified with that deliverance from Egypt which was the beginning of their national life. His name was so interwoven with the laws and institutions, the history and the hopes of the nation, that Christ in his time cited Moses as a final authority in matters of faith and obligation: "Did not Moses give you the law?"[4] . . . "Moses gave unto you circumcision."[5] . . . "There is one that accuseth you; even Moses, in whom ye trust."[6] As witnesses

[2] The hippopotamus was a symbol of the god of the under-world.
[3] Bunsen, Egypt's Place, 1. 444.
[4] John vii. 19. [5] John vii. 22. [6] John v. 45.

for Moses, we have the unbroken tradition of a people who still retain their separate identity of race and language; we have their annals, their code, their institutions, their festivals, their worship, their service-book, each and all so incorporated with his name, that the critic who would extirpate the personality of Moses from the Pentateuch must cut out the central ganglion of the Jewish system, and paralyze the whole.

Yet, notwithstanding the unanimity of Jewish testimony to Moses as the founder of the nation, the Hebrews as a race are never called the children of Moses, but the "seed of Abraham." In the line of their descent, there were historical persons before Moses; and he appears as a human character in his place in history, and not as the creation of a myth out of unknown pre-historic elements. The cumulative proofs of this personality we will now examine somewhat in detail.

Egypt and the desert, presenting the wildest contrast in physical geography, in natural products, in historical associations, in monumental remains, in races and social customs, and in institutions of government and religion, are yet linked together by a series of events, which, though comprised within the lifetime of one man, and largely associated with his name, are among the most striking and momentous in the history of mankind. The "exceptional grandeur" of the hero who united in himself such widely-opposite spheres of action, and who achieved in both results to which history affords no parallel, has kindled even the cold, cautious, sometimes carping criticism of Ewald into a glow of enthusiasm. His chronic doubting con-

cerning the earlier Hebrew records here gives place to the conviction of historical reality. "We may discover the surprising greatness of Moses from the fact that it is not merely in this story of the gradual rising of the Israelites and their deliverance from Egypt that his name shines pre-eminently bright, but also, and if possible with even greater lustre, in the succeeding very different history of the development of the liberated people in Asia. Thus he is the unparalleled hero who sustains the grandeur of two perfectly distinct yet equally exalted epochs. . . . To fathom such an actual life as that of Moses would be one of the most difficult of historic problems, did we even possess the most abundant materials; . . . yet that he was possessed of a soul of extraordinary greatness, and that he worked, and worked with wonderful power and success, remains perfectly clear, unless we choose to ascribe to chance whatever is most spiritual in the world, and so to plunge ourselves into blindness.[1] . . . Our life," he adds, "moves in the midst of those very truths which received their first currency and acknowledgment from Moses and other minds like his; we are sustained and protected by them; we live in the hourly enjoyment of their blessed fruits. . . . But how few are now able to appreciate the power which first and alone grasps such truths, and is then able also to connect them with the innermost life of a nation, and thus permanently establish them in the world!"

The conviction of the historical personality of Moses, to which Ewald is brought by internal evidences in the Hebrew documents, when subjected to the most

[1] Hist. of Israel, i. 438, 439, 457, Martineau's translation.

searching criticism, is shared by Lepsius, Brugsch, Chabas, Rougé, Bunsen, Ebers, — in a word, by the great masters of Egyptology, — from a comparison of the Hebrew narrative with the monumental and literary remains of Egypt, especially with Manetho's account of the expulsion of the lepers.[8] Brugsch speaks of certain monuments of Rameses II. as a highly satisfactory commentary upon the authentic narrative of the Exodus in the Hebrew Scriptures:[9] and Bunsen, determining Egypt's place in universal history, says of this same narrative, "The Exodus is an historical fact, which occurred in an historical age, and was governed by notorious great events, and circumstances of importance to general history;"[10] and again, with even greater emphasis, he says, "History was born in that night when Moses, with the law of God — moral and spiritual — in his heart, led the people of Israel out of Egypt."[11]

We start, then, with this wide consent of scholars, hardly one of whom can be classed among believers in the inspiration of the Old Testament, to the historical personality of Moses. Whatever myths may have gathered about him in what some style "the Hebrew tradition," he himself was no myth: however critics differ as to his period, his writings, his miracles, his laws and institutions, they concede that this extraordinary man lived in Egypt, led forth his race into the desert, and there inspired them with that organic national life which endured through so many ages in

[8] Lepsius interprets this as referring to a different event from the expulsion of the Hyksos. — *Chronologie der Ægypter*, p. 325.

[9] *Histoire d'Égypte*, i. 156.

[10] Egypt's Place, iii. 263.

[11] Egypt's Place, i. 23.

Palestine. Indeed, it would be hard to make out a clearer case of historical identity. Mr. Grote's theory[12] concerning the baseless origin of the *Volks-Sage*, or popular myth, — as "the natural effusion of the unlettered, imaginative, and believing man," which takes the form of historical faith, until "the multiplication of recorded facts, the diffusion of positive science, and the formation of a critical standard of belief, tend to discredit its dignity," — requires to be qualified by a class of traditions which give internal evidence of some substantial reality at their foundation. Even in the myths of the Greek world, where "the uselessness of digging for a supposed basis of truth" seems almost self-evident, there are examples of national tradition which argue some foregoing but forgotten history as their source. Take, for instance, the Hellenic myths of the settlement of the coast of Greece by Heaven-sent messengers: "Notwithstanding the pride taken by the Greeks in their autochthony, they constantly connect the foundation of their social life with the arrival of highly-gifted strangers, whose supernatural power and wisdom were believed to have brought a new order into the life of men. In short, all the myths reach beyond the narrow limits of the European peninsula, and point to a land beyond the seas, whence the gods and heroes came across. So far the meaning of the myths is clear and manifest; viz., a consciousness of a civilization brought over from the East by colonization. But as to the identity of these colonists there is naturally a much greater obscurity of conception."[13]

[12] History of Greece, vol. i. *passim*.

[13] Dr. Ernst Curtius, History of Greece, b. i. chap. 2.

Clearly, then, we must discriminate between myths which grow out of some subjective feeling or fancy and those which gather about an objective and historical reality. Myths are often but parasitic growths upon a character or an event whose substantial vitality keeps them alive. Sometimes the parasitical plant may envelop the supporting stock so as completely to hide it from view; and it may eventually absorb the life upon which at first it only fed. Sometimes, again, myths may spring up like mushrooms, out of the mould of the dead past, or the refuse and rubbish of primitive traditions, and may grow so thick and rank as to cover the field of history: but the steel blade of criticism, ploughing the ground, turns up their rootless stalks; and their bulging heads split like punk, or collapse like puff-balls. Thus Mommsen puffs away the "naive improvised" story of Romulus and Remus as not having even the merit of ingenuity.[14] But, on the other hand, a myth may represent some thought or fact behind it which is greater than it can embody or express: the imagination is brought in to aid in bearing that which overpowers the vision, weighs down the understanding, oppresses the sensibility, burdens the memory; and the very attempt to exaggerate upon this side or that only reveals by glimpses the greatness of the real subject.

Both by their conception and by their contrasts, the myths may certify a character which they did not invent, and cannot supplant.

A thousand years after Alfred, the fancy of Tennyson can charm us with the myths that are woven about his name: —

[14] Mommsen, History of Rome, b. i. chap. 4.

> "The Lady of the Lake,
> Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
> Who gave the king his huge cross-hilted sword,
> With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
> Bewildering heart and eye;"

the vision of the Holy Grail; the gatherings at the Round Table in the noble hall; the passing of Arthur, when, having hurled back the wondrous sword into the sea, he entered the mysterious barge, "dense with stately forms," and glided over the waters till the black dot vanished against the verge of dawn, — these, and a hundred other legends of Alfred, only serve to throw into bold relief the stainless knight, the princely warrior, the just ruler, the gentle scholar, the true and loving man, the devout, self-sacrificing believer.

And so the myths that Josephus, Philo, the Rabbins, and Mohammed have gathered about the name of Moses: How, in the night when he was born, the idols in all the temples of Egypt were dashed down: how his mother hid him in the oven behind a heap of wood, and when the vizier came to search the house, and set fire to the wood, the infant called to his mother, "Be calm, my mother; Allah has given the fire no power over me:" how a huge black serpent fled at the voice of the babe in his little ark, and the earth opened to swallow a sentry who had threatened to betray his hiding-place: how, when taken up by Pharaoh's daughter, the babe refused the milk of Egyptian nurses, so that a Hebrew had to be sent for: how the seven daughters of Pharaoh, who had been ordered to bathe in the Nile to cure their leprosy, were instantly healed at sight of Moses:

how, when the child was three years old, Pharaoh put a crown on his head, but he dashed it to the ground, and trampled on it; and the monarch, dreading this omen, tested him with a basin filled with jewels, and another of burning coals; whereupon the child, directed by an angel, put a coal into his mouth, and thus saved himself, though he became a stammerer for life: how his beauty attracted all passers-by, and even laborers left their work to steal a glance at him: how, at the University of Heliopolis, he was taught arithmetic, geometry, Greek, Chaldee, and Assyrian, the whole science of rhythm, harmony, and metre, and the use of musical instruments, in which he instructed Orpheus: how he invented hieroglyphics, boats, engines for building, and instruments of war: how he led the Egyptians against the Ethiopians, and first cleared the desert of serpents by sending out flocks of ibises to devour them; and then so captivated the daughter of the Ethiopian king by his beauty, as she looked upon him from the walls, that she opened the gates of the city to receive him, and gave him her hand in marriage: and how, when he was about to depart this life, in the excess of his modesty and piety, lest the people should deify him, he took the precaution to write beforehand in the sacred books that he *died!*[15] — these and a hundred other legends, gathered by tradition around the name of Moses, are but as the trees and shrubs and flowers, and the gilded chapel-walls and pillars, that pious care has planted and reared at the base of Sinai, contrasting the majestic front of rock that

[15] For these and other legends, consult Josephus, Philo, the Talmud, the Koran, Weil's Biblical Legends, and Lane's Selections from the Koran.

towers above, shining with the glory of Jehovah, and giving forth his voice.[16]

Unlike the mythical Excalibur that rose out of the sea to equip Alfred for his conquests, and was thrown back into the sea as a prelude to his death, the rod of Moses derived its virtue from his own faith in God, and still has power both to swallow up the lying legends that would simulate its wonders, and to discomfit the hordes of Amalek that would blot out Israel from history.

When the mythical attaches itself to the heroic, its presence may be detected in the attempt to exaggerate the *infancy* of the hero to proportions corresponding with his after-greatness: it leaves nothing natural. Hercules strangled two serpents in his cradle: while yet in his minority, he mastered all arts and sciences, and destroyed the huge lion that was the terror of the Thespians. Every thing he did was on the scale of the gigantic.

In the apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, the child is invested with supernatural powers from his birth: the book is devoted, not to miracles of simple attestation like the song of the angels at Bethlehem, but to the display of the marvellous. An old woman, laying her hand upon the infant in his cradle, was healed of her infirmities. The wise men received his swaddling-cloth as a keepsake; and as they were worshipping, after the manner of their country, the fire seized this cloth and enveloped it, but gave it forth again unhurt. When the child was carried into Egypt, all the idols fell down. He opened

[16] Even there, tradition points to the impression made by the back of Moses upon the rock, as he shrank from the glory of Jehovah!

a well in a sycamore-tree to wash his clothes, and the tree ever after yielded a healing balsam. A boy possessed of devils touched the infant's clothes, which were hung out upon a post to dry, and the devils came out of his mouth, and flew away in the shape of crows and serpents. A young woman was cured of the leprosy by the water in which the babe had been washed. At seven years old, playing with boys in the clay, Jesus made figures of birds, which, at his command, would fly and eat and drink. In his father's shop he made all manner of wooden-ware by mere word of mouth, correcting the awkward carpentry of his father, and increasing the income of the family. In short, there was nothing strange or incredible heard of or imagined but it was at once imputed to this wonderful child. One has but to compare this book of marvels with the simple story of the evangelists, their silence touching the childhood of Jesus (with the solitary exception of his visit to the temple), to detect the false, and confirm the true.

Now, in the biblical story of the birth and the training of Moses, there is no attempt to make him a precocious child, to crowd his infancy with marvels and prognostics of his future: on the contrary, every incident told of him is *natural;* the local descriptions are true to the life; and the conduct of each of the parties introduced is true to nature.

The Egypt which had welcomed Abraham with a royal hospitality, and in which Joseph, having risen to rank and power, was enabled to provide so munificently for his brethren, was now ruled by a Pharaoh whose policy toward the unaffiliated race of Hebrews upon his soil, like that of Ferdinand and Isabella of

Spain toward the Jews, and of the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia toward the Poles, was coercion, repression, or extermination. There was a reason for this, on the one hand, in the increase of this compact community of foreigners; and, on the other, in the dangers which threatened Egypt on its eastern frontier. The monuments and the literature of Egypt show how frequent were her wars with the tribes of Syria and Arabia; and more than one fortified post, or *migdol*, was erected along the line of the Eastern desert. There was danger that the Hebrews by and by would outnumber the native Egyptians in the Delta; and inasmuch as they kept up their ancestral traditions, and in some measure also the faith of their fathers, with its promise of an independent nationality, they might become a dangerous element in the event of war between Egypt and a foreign power. "Come on, then," said the king to his advisers, "let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land."[17] Fear begets cruelty in the seat of power: and Pharaoh's policy was, first, to crush the spirit of the people by servile and exacting labors; next, to hinder their increase by cutting off their male issue; and so, finally, to merge them with the Egyptians by intermarriage. Homer describes the Egyptians as treacherous and cruel toward strangers landing upon their coast: "Some they would put to death; others they led away inland alive, and there subjected them to forced labor."[18] The king decreed that every son born of a Hebrew mother should be

[17] Exod. i. 10. [18] Odyssey, xiv. 272.

drowned in the Nile. This ancient Bomba of inventive cruelty, having exhausted all other devices for their subjection, resolved to exterminate the Hebrew race. Bunsen argues that this audacious act must have been preceded by a long period of oppression, breaking the spirit of the Israelites; but the rapid strides of despotism in modern times — as in Hungary thirty years ago, and more recently in France — show that these successive measures of tyranny may all have been crowded into one reign.

The mother of Moses, having concealed him for three months from the Egyptian spies, cautiously procured a little boat made of bulrushes coated with bitumen and pitch, and deposited him in this "ark" among the flags on the bank of the Nile. The use of the papyrus for boat-building in Egypt is often mentioned by ancient writers, and is illustrated upon the monuments. According to Plutarch, Isis sought the body of Osiris "through the fenny country, in a bark made of the papyrus." Strabo says of his visit to Philæ, "We crossed over to the island in a pacton, which is a small boat made of rods, resembling woven work." [19] Pliny describes the Nile-boats as "made of papyrus, rushes, and reeds." [20] Thus do the most incidental allusions of the Hebrew narrative to the natural history and the popular customs of Egypt carry upon their face the evidence that the writer was at home in that country. He is not writing a book of travels, nor describing the peculiarities of the country; and therefore the accuracy of his incidental references to the most trivial matters is the more striking, for this is the natural style of one

[19] B. xvii. c. i. § 50. [20] Nat. Hist., vii. 57.

who was brought up among the scenes to which he alludes.

The place where this second ark of human destiny was exposed cannot be identified from any reference in the narrative itself. Mohammedan tradition locates it upon the beautiful Island of Rhoda, opposite to old Cairo, or *Musr el Atéekeh*, and near the site of ancient Memphis. But this tradition is valuable only as showing how the story of the infant Moses has survived all the changes of dynasty and of population upon the soil of Egypt.

"The daughter of Pharaoh went down to bathe at the river, and her maidens walked by the river's side." Seeing the little ark among the flags, she sent a maid-servant to fetch it. As she opened it, the babe began to cry; and the princess, perceiving that it was one of the Hebrew children, was touched with compassion, and resolved to adopt the child as her own.

The public bathing of women in the river seems so contrary to that seclusion and reserve which Oriental custom enjoins upon the female sex, that this incident appears at first, and has been used by some, to discredit the narrative. A Turk would be as greatly scandalized at it as were the Japanese embassy at seeing women in the audience-chamber of the President of the United States on their first official reception. Dean Stanley ascribes this incident to a primitive state of manners: "The Egyptian princess came down, after the Homeric simplicity of the age, to bathe in the sacred river, or to play by its side."[21] Yet the monuments of this period show, that in point of art, society, customs, manners, Egypt

[21] Smith's Bible Dictionary, art. "Moses."

was then very far removed from a state of "Homeric simplicity:" she was at the acme of her luxurious civilization. But, in ancient Egypt, women were never restricted as in Asiatic nations. The monuments show that in social festivities they appeared unveiled, sharing the pleasures of the men; that they took part in public festivals and in mourning-scenes. In a tomb at Thebes, there is a representation of a lady sitting in a bath, attended by four maids, who are rubbing and anointing her person. Such a picture, introducing the spectator to the very sanctuary of woman's privacy, is more French than Persian. But a princess could have commanded privacy even when bathing in the Nile. Thus the very divergence of Egyptian customs touching women from the customs of Asiatic nations lends additional confirmation to the Hebrew narrative.

The naturalness of every incident in that narrative, its local and incidental verisimilitude, separate the story of Moses from that of Semiramis and that of Romulus and Remus, which have, in common with it, the feature of the exposure of the infant. No dove here comes to feed the babe, no wolf to suckle it. It was natural that the Egyptian king, jealous of the growing numbers of a foreign race, should seek to cripple them by destroying their male offspring. It was natural that the parents of Moses should secrete him as long as possible; and, when they could no longer hide him, the expedient of committing him to a floating cradle upon the reedy margin of the river was but the natural ingenuity of maternal affection. The finding of the cradle by the king's daughter was a natural incident; and her adoption

of the helpless crying babe was but the natural prompting of a woman's sympathy. Every woman who reads the story would have done the same. The addition of Philo,[22] that she afterwards feigned herself *enceinte* in order to pass off Moses as her own child, is one of those parasitic legends, which, by contrast, enable us the better to appreciate the simplicity of the original story. The very name *Moses*, which, however we may interpret it, is of Egyptian derivation, connects this wonderful man with Egypt as the land of his birth.[23]

How significant, now, is the omission of all mention of Moses until he appears before us for a moment, in his prime, the avenger of the wrongs of his brethren; then disappears as suddenly, a fugitive into the desert! What a tempting field for romance! — that boyhood in the palace, that youth at the university, that manhood at court; the splendid prizes which Joseph had won inciting his ambition; the watchful teachings of his mother quickening his conscience;

[22] Philo, Moses, i. 5.

[23] MOSES (Hebrew *Mosheh*, Septuagint Μωϋσῆς, Arabic *Mûsa*), — *drawn out*. In Exod. ii. 10, this name is said to have been given because he was drawn out of the water. Though the active participle *Mosheh* is there used, Gesenius understands it in a passive sense, meaning "drawn out." Others, using it actively, apply it to Moses as the leader and preserver of his people. Others, again, derive it from an Egyptian compound, meaning *saved from the water*. Josephus (Antiq., ii. ix. 6) regards the name as of Egyptian origin, and commemorative of the peculiar circumstances of his exposure in the Nile: "For the Egyptians call the water *Mo*; and one who is rescued from the waves, *Uses*." This accords with the Septuagint. Some, however, find in the name an analogy to various Egyptian names, — *Amosis*, *Thumosis*, &c., into which the term *Môs*, signifying "son," enters as a compound. The etymology of the name is discussed at length by Knobel, *Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament* (Exod. ii. 10); and by Lepsius, *Chronologie der Ægypter* (p. 326, *n.*). Dr. Lepsius traces the name to an Egyptian source. Brugsch regards it as wholly Egyptian, its hieroglyphic equivalent being *Mes*, or *Messou*, which signifies "the child." — *Histoire d'Égypte*, i. 157.

the jealousies, the intrigues, the honors, and the perils attending his anomalous position; so near the throne, yet incapable of the succession. What a margin for the heroic and the marvellous left all unfilled! The briefest mention of Stephen, that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians;[24] and of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that "Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt,"[25] — these traditions, adopted, and so far authenticated, by the apostles, are the only hints that the Bible gives of the life of Moses in Egypt.

We cannot doubt, however, from his position, that Moses was thoroughly trained both in the science and in the religion of the Egyptians. The traces of Egyptian precedents in his laws go to confirm his personal history; while the deviation from Egyptian ideas and worship in his religion argues his inspiration from another source.

The very silence of the story regarding the youth and early manhood of Moses is an attestation of its truth: for there is no attempt to make of Moses a hero; but he comes and goes before us only as he stands related to the great moral purposes of Jehovah. In this view, he was driven from Egypt into the desert in order to his inner spiritual development for his great work.

In going from Egypt into the desert, one passes immediately from the empire of man into the empire

[24] Acts vii. 22. [25] Heb. xi. 24 seq.

of God. Riding through the thronged bazaars of Cairo, where men of every nation jostle you with their burdens, and confuse you with their jargon; passing by gorgeous mosques, decorated fountains, airy balconies, and lofty ornamented houses, — you emerge upon an avenue which conducts to a princely palace without the walls. Rows of trees artificially nurtured keep up for a while the semblance of vegetation; but no sooner have you passed the palace, with its elaborate gardens, than you plunge into the open desert, where, far as the eye can reach, you see neither tree nor shrub nor house, nor any living thing. The huge bulk of the Pyramids beyond the river fades from your view; the obelisk of Heliopolis recedes; the minarets of the city grow less and less distinct: at last the rocky citadel itself disappears; and, as upon the ocean, you are shut in by an horizon that touches at every point the surface upon which you move. No sound is heard but the soft tread of camels, or your own unanswered voice. No token of man is seen, — no house, no fence, no tree, no monument, no footstep even, save the well-trodden path of caravans. "One dead uniform silence reigns over the whole region." The sun sinks into the great basin of sand before you, and night shuts in the wide circumference of desolation. The silence is deep, is awful. No lights of city towers or village homes relieve the gloom: only the stars look kindly down, reminding you whose eye is there. The sun rises in the morning directly out of the bed of sand: his first look is a glare, unmitigated by mists or clouds; and, as he mounts to the meridian, he glares upon the sand, and the sand glares back upon the sun,

until he sinks again into its bed.[26] And all is vast and desolate and silent, — the sky above, the hard, bare soil beneath, and God in all.

When Moses plunged into the desert, this contrast of the human with the divine was at its highest point. Then the monuments of Egypt, whose ruins now amaze the traveller, were in their glory. A vast city adjacent to the Pyramids, of which now hardly a trace is found, was then the capital; and where now a lone column or obelisk juts above the sand, stood temples and palaces in all the pride of Egyptian art. Then the population was dense, and the government was strong and enterprising, rearing new works as stupendous as those of former reigns. All this glory Moses had known, not as the stranger who now imagines it from its remains, but with the familiar knowledge of one bred at court; and from the luxuries of the palace he fled into the desert, an exile, without attendants or provisions to solace its gloom. There he lived forty years, at fifteen-days' remove from any city or town, with no facilities of communication with his brethren, a solitary shepherd, a stranger in the tribe to which he joined himself; living where, from year to year, he saw only the desert and the sea, the narrow verdure of the wadies, and the bald, rugged mountains that break the leafless waste with their sterner desolation, — shut out from man, shut in with God! Given to solitude and meditation, where the vastness of the Creator's power oppresses the senses; where the infinity of his being is shadowed in the

[26] This description refers, of course, to the average of days during the dry season. In December and January, the days are often diversified by rain. So, too, the surface varies from sand to flint and gravel.

wide expanse of earth, air, and sky; where his omnipresence is almost a palpable reality, and the Invisible is ever near; and where, in the profusion of mere naked power, man becomes but an atom of the sand he treads upon, —

> "So separate from the world, his breast
> Might duly take and strongly keep
> The print of Heaven, to be expressed
> Ere long on Sion's steep." [27]

There is no discipline of the soul for a great work like communing with the thought of God in solitude. It lives and moves in Him; is filled with his spirit and his strength. Cromwell gained that moral power which made him invincible in his earlier career by his solitary musings upon the Bible as he worked his own estate among the stagnant marshes of the Ouse. Luther was nurtured into his sublime heroism by his solitary communings with God through that old chained Bible in the convent of Erfurt. Paul was not suffered to begin his apostleship with the hot zeal of the neophyte, but was subjected to the discipline of solitude in Arabia.[28] Jesus himself went alone into the mountain or the desert to pray.

How Moses improved the lessons of the desert we gather from the ninetieth psalm, which ancient Jewish tradition, and the general consent of modern criticism, ascribe to him,[29] and which so well accords with the deep earnestness and reverence of his spirit and the outward conditions of his personal experience. It is in unison with the conception of God

[27] Keble's Christian Year, thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.
[28] Gal. i. 18. [29] See Calvin, Tholuck, Ewald, Hitzig, Hengstenberg.

which opens the Pentateuch, and with the recital of God's dealings with Israel which closes it.[30] Moses had gazed upon those primitive rocks, whose bald fronts, towering in the Desert of Sinai, are the most startling monuments of almighty power, showing how the worlds were made; he had seen the fierce winter torrents sweep through the gullies, with masses of sand and stone, heaping up destruction; he had seen the rapid but transitory vegetation that springs up after the rains; and seeing in all this God's power, and man's nothingness, he sang, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations: before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction: thou carriest them away as with a flood: they are like grass, which in the morning flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth." This sublime composition was both the fruit and the exponent of the discipline of Moses in the desert.

But Moses was not sent into the desert merely for the culture of his own heart in piety. God has no place in his providence for a perpetual hermit. The use of solitary communing with God is to prepare the soul for public action for God among men. Moses was sent into the desert to become qualified for that work which his departure from Egypt seemed to frustrate. While faith in God was strengthened, and the feeling of dependence on his power was cherished in the soul, all unruly passions were tamed; all self-reliance upon name, position,

[30] Deut. xxxii. 7, 15, 36.

energy, wisdom, was destroyed; all extravagant schemes of personal effort were abandoned; and the mind was brought to a simple, constant trust in Jehovah. In Egypt, in a self-appointing enthusiasm, he had thought of delivering the people, and had said, "*I will:*" now he heard the voice of the I AM say, "*Go.*"

The scenes of desert-life that group themselves about the person of Moses, coming in direct contrast with the incidents of his Egyptian birth, are another confirmation of the narrative. Every line is true to nature. The maidens at the well watering their flocks, driven away by the rough shepherds, who treated women as inferiors; the welcome of Moses to the tents of the sheik, their father; his marriage to one of the daughters; and, seeing that he brought no dowry, his consequent subordination to Jethro, — all this was properly and distinctively *Arabian.* In Egypt, where water was drawn from the river and its canals, and where the people were not nomadic, but agricultural, the opening incident could hardly have been conceived; but in the desert, dotted here and there with wells, and roamed by pastoral tribes, it might have happened any day. So of the shifting of encampments, according to the transient, fluctuating supply of water, upon which the life of the flocks depended: that this should have led Moses to some spring-clad wady near Horeb was an incident that might repeat itself there to-day. And this minute correspondence with the physical conditions of two such widely-contrasted countries as Egypt and Arabia gives reality to the story. These pictures of desert-life are like the photographs of the Sinaitic peninsula taken by the ordnance-survey.

Though the mountains of that region are bare of vegetation, their wash, accumulating in the wadies scooped out by the winter torrents, forms a soil in which here and there a palm-tree strikes its roots, and a scanty herbage springs up. To these little Edens, of which the Wady Feiran is the most inviting, the roving tribes of the desert resort when the rain fills the pools, or when the dates cluster upon the trees. Here, under their rude tents of skins, or in huts of stone covered with branches of the palm, safe from intrusion, sheltered from the heat, beside a purling brook that seems to issue from the sand and to lose itself in the sand again, or a well in which the winter rains, percolated through the sand, remain secure from the drought of summer, surrounded by their sheep, goats, and camels, their all of this world's good, this simple people enjoy a paradise which they would not exchange for the palaces of the city.

But Moses was not a Bedouin; and, though he adapted himself uncomplainingly to his position, he could not stifle memory or hope. How wide the contrast of his position with that which he forsook in Egypt! The adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, bred in the court, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, familiar with the great, accustomed to the arts and luxuries of civilized life, capable of legislation, of martial deeds, of whatever is demanded in the founder of a State, is living in concealment among the mountains of the desert, married to the daughter of a Bedouin sheik, and tending the flocks of her father for the sake of his daily bread and of a tent to cover him. But more than this contrast of outward

circumstances is the contrast of his powerless and almost useless life with the hopes he had cherished for the deliverance of Israel. How like a dream appears his own deliverance from the Nile; his cottage-life with his mother; his adoption at the court; his grand scheme of emancipation; his renunciation of personal hopes for the good of his brethren; his hasty interference, misconstrued even by those he meant to succor, and, instead of the signal of revolt, becoming the opprobrium of the slaves, exciting the ire of the king, and putting his own life in jeopardy! Often as he sat upon the rocks, with the sheep of Jethro browsing around him, would he start as at the cry of his brethren groaning in bondage, and, his blood tingling through his veins, rouse himself for their deliverance; then remembering the price set upon his head, and the absurdity of a disowned fugitive appearing for the rescue of two millions of people unarmed and dispirited by oppression, he would sink down in perplexity, questioning his violence toward the Egyptian, questioning his call from God, questioning the possibility of the deliverance that Joseph had predicted, and his mother had looked for through himself.

But never could he lose his solicitude for his brethren in bonds. As the exiled patriot, once the leader of armies and the head of a revolutionized nation, living in obscurity and want, baffled, disowned, traduced, a price upon his head, still adds to his personal sufferings the deeper woes of his country, and watches for the signal that shall call him to her aid; so did Moses, pasturing his flocks along the Elanitic gulf, look wistfully across the desert to the land of

Goshen, not longing for the lost pleasures of the court, nor regretting his self-sacrifice, but sighing for his brethren there sweltering in the clay-pits under the lash.

With a yet deeper significance may we say concerning this solitariness of Moses, what Ferdinand Hiller has so finely said concerning the deafness of Beethoven: "How can we speak of solitude in the case of a man who really and truly was at home in a different world from that which surrounded him? The man who, with his inward ear, could hear the *adagio* of the Ninth Symphony and the *benedictus* of the Missa Solemnis, required no excitement of the senses. It is a great question whether his inability to hear did not contribute to make his nature more profound."

So the seclusion of Moses from the schools of intellectual life, from the pomp and glare of royal power, from the magnificence of religious pageants, from the wealth of palaces and temples, from the din of commerce and of arms, in a word, his seclusion from the excitements of that artificial world which is the product of human civilization, turning his consciousness more profoundly within itself, opened his inward ear to the voice of God. And, like the most soulful master of the most soulful art, Moses showed his greatness in that he was able to express in works that live "the lofty emotions and views that lived within him." The rugged grandeur of the decalogue towers above the well-compacted empire of Egypt, like Sinai itself above the Pyramids.

The discipline of Moses in the desert was preparing the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Be-

sides his subjective preparation for the heroic work of leadership, the practical knowledge he gained of the desert itself qualified him to conduct the march of so vast a multitude with due regard to safety, order, and comfort. He knew every well, every fountain, every wady, the best route of march, the best places of encampment. His shepherd-life inured him to exposure, and made of him a practical surveyor. It was like the discipline of frontier-life to the youthful Washington contrasted with the refinement of the Fairfax family. And here comes up a feature which stamps this narrative not only with the genuineness of history, but with the token of divinity, — the thorough *humanity* of the hero. That mysterious border-line between the hero and the god, which the traditions of other ancient nations have peopled with demigods and with demiurgic powers, is not once crossed, is not even approached, in the history of Moses. He remains throughout a man, and betrays the infirmities of a man.

His training at the court of Pharaoh, acquainting him with the laws and institutions, the science, philosophy, and religion, of the foremost nation of antiquity, qualified him to discriminate as to the elements of a civil polity for a new national life; but this high training apart from his people had also developed in him an impetuosity of will, a forwardness of self-assertion, that required to be tamed before he could attempt his majestic *rôle* of leadership. While his retaliation upon the Egyptian whom he spied smiting a Hebrew argues a nobility of nature that would risk its condition of privilege through sympathy with the oppressed, yet his quick dealing

of death shows hot blood as well;[31] and there was probably an imperiousness of manner that led the wrangling Hebrews next day to demand, "Who made *thee* a prince and a judge over us?"

Fleeing from the danger that threatened his too sanguine temperament, he at once takes up the cudgel for the maidens at the well against the unmannerly shepherds. But the discipline of exile in the desert wrought out the further discipline of humiliation and dependence; and both are touchingly expressed in the names of his children, — *Gershom*, "I am a stranger in a strange land;" and *Eliezer*, "the God of my father was my help." The tone of his mind was even changed from an impetuosity that bordered upon presumption to a self-distrust that bordered upon timidity; and he needed now that consciousness of a divine call, which for the rashness of zeal should give him the courage of faith, and for the impetuous daring of self-confidence the calm, measured, enduring strength of dependence upon God. This was the lesson of the burning bush; at which Moses was as anxious to excuse himself from

[31] Augustine condemns this deed of Moses as unjustifiable violence. The Koran represents it as a work of Satan, of which Moses repented; but Philo (Vit. Mos., i. viii.) regards it as "a pious action to destroy one who only lived for the destruction of others." Moses never afterward alluded to it with remorse; and in his own code he makes a wide distinction between killing by guile, and killing through sudden heat, to avenge an injury or injustice. Whatever judgment Christian ethics may pronounce upon the act, the motive that prompted it commands our respect. A quick sympathy with the suffering and the oppressed marks a noble nature. Stephen intimates that the act was symbolical and prophetic, — a signal to prepare the Hebrews for revolt. "He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them." If Moses had already received some intimation from God of the part that he should act in the deliverance of the Israelites, there is no mention of this in the book of Exodus; and the subsequent narrative would rather show that Moses had mistaken the time or the method appointed of God for the emancipation of his people.

the office of deliverer, as in Egypt he had been forward to assume it. This fidelity of the record to his weakness as well as to his humility; this touch of nature in the shrinking of an old man from responsibilities he had invited in his prime; this distrust of his own presence, speech, and influence, induced by long seclusion from affairs, and even from civilized life; this subsidence of personal ambition; this distrust of his fellows; this almost despair of his times and his mission, — once more place this narrative at the farthest remove from the mythical and legendary, and attest its historic truth. There could hardly be a more disparaging treatment of a hero than this, which, so far from investing him with divine attributes, or bringing him upon the stage full-panoplied with heavenly armor, represents him as provoking the anger of the Lord by an almost cowardly hesitation, an almost stubborn distrust; and, if we accept it as coming from Moses himself, the narrative bears intrinsic evidence of truth, and testifies to the sincerity of his character.

Of miracles in a philosophical point of view it is not my province to speak;[32] but one or two peculiarities in the miracles of the Exodus here arrest attention.

The phenomenon of the burning bush rests upon the testimony of Moses as its solitary witness; and hence some would class this with the night-vision of Mohammed. Ewald resolves it into a subjective experience conveying the profound truth that the mind of the prophet was suddenly penetrated with the

[32] The question of miracles was very fully discussed in the course of lectures for 1869–70.

divine light, and absorbed into the mind and will of God. The supposed analogy with Mohammed's vision fails, however, in the two vital points of the intrinsic worth of the things revealed, and of subsequent acts or events attesting its reality, and confirming the witness.

In the twelfth year of his mission, Mohammed gave out that he was carried by night from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence ascended into heaven. Devout Mussulmans still believe that an indentation in the rock on the summit of the Mount of Olives is the mark of his camel's foot as he spurned the earth for his aerial excursion.

Some time after, being pursued by his enemies, Mohammed hid in a cave: as soon as he had entered, two doves laid their eggs at the entrance, and a spider covered the mouth of the cave with her web; which so deceived the pursuers, that they gave over the hunt. It was in such marvels as these that he rested the supernatural evidences of his call. But, in all his career as prophet, Mohammed never attempted an open miracle: indeed, he disclaimed miraculous power, though he claimed supernatural illumination, and appealed to the Koran as the greatest of miracles. It is said that the original of this remarkable production, the marvel of Arabian literature, is beside the throne of God, written on a tablet of vast size. A copy from this tablet, in one volume, on paper, was sent down to the lowest heaven in charge of the angel Gabriel, who thence revealed it to Mohammed, by sections, in the course of twenty-three years. Gabriel's complete copy, which was bound in silk, and adorned with gold and precious

stones of paradise, was shown to Mohammed for his consolation once a year; and in the year of his death he was privileged to see it twice. But though the Koran, in the elegance and purity of its style, and the felicity and finish of that rhyming prose in which the Arabian ear delights, is the standard and glory of the Arabic tongue, in its conception and subject-matter it lacks originality, being founded upon the Jewish and Christian Scriptures as the general basis of its historical and ethical ideas, while it adds to these puerilities, extravagances, and sensuous immoralities, that everywhere mark the tampering of the human with the divine. Moreover, next to the restoration of faith in the unity of God by a vigorous protest against both idolatry and unbelief, the main object of the book is the exaltation of Mohammed himself as the greatest and last of prophets.

We have seen, on the contrary, the self-depreciation of Moses in the account of his divine call, — a feature which thoroughly distinguishes this narrative from the work of myth-makers and hero-worshippers, and marks it as a genuine narrative, and therefore as having come from himself. But, while he makes such a sorry hero or prophet of himself, — for a *pretender*, — he comes forward and proves his divine call by works of divine power. Whereas Mohammed told marvellous stories of divine revelations, but did no miracles, Moses first wrought wonders, and then made revelations; and both were in sublime harmony.

Using always the rod that he had at the burning bush, Moses wrought miracles upon the grandest scale in presence of two nations; and this rod — un-

like the Excalibur of King Arthur, which two hundred and one of the most puissant barons before him had vainly endeavored to dislodge from its miraculous stone — was nothing but the common shepherd's staff which Moses chanced to have in his hand. This rod was connected so closely with the whole series of miracles in Egypt and in the desert, that, to discredit the incident of the burning bush, one must set aside the history of the Exodus, or believe, that, by the wonders in Egypt, the seal of divinity was set upon a fantasy or an imposture of Moses.

But some would discredit those wonders themselves, regarding them as exaggerations of natural phenomena familiar to Egypt, — the periodical reddening of the Nile; the darkening, blinding effect of the *kamsin;* the sudden swarms of flies, of gnats, and of locusts: all natural facts, about which the myth of the miraculous was woven, it is said, by priestcraft or by credulity. And some would even go farther, and class these miracles with the clever impostures of the Egyptian magicians.

In considering these views, we must hold the critics of the miracles sharply to the point. Either criticism, to have any weight, must assume the truth of the narrative as its own foundation; for our *only* knowledge of the events under review is derived from the book of Exodus. It is here that the "enchantments" of the "magicians" are recorded; it is here that the analogy of the plagues to natural phenomena is suggested: and the critic must not be permitted first to argue from the enchantments and analogies brought to his knowledge by the narrative itself, against the miraculous character of the events that

are set in express contrast to nature and magic, and then to turn about, and, asserting the natural or magical character of *all* the events, argue against the historical character of the narrative from which he insists upon taking his own proof that the phenomena were not supernatural. We will meet him upon either ground; but logical fairness forbids that we should concede him both at the same time.

Now, we are told expressly, that, in the three instances in which the magicians similated the wonders of Moses, "they did so by their *enchantments*."[33] The narrative which gives us our only information of the partial successes of the sorcerers, states, also, that these were feats of jugglery. The fact that Moses himself records the successful imitations of the sorcerers is a sign of his honesty, and of his fearlessness of comparison. These imitations, however, were upon a small scale, and were limited to a few phenomena in which such trickery was possible. But the magicians uniformly failed to undo what they themselves had done, — much less could they reverse or counteract any plague which Moses had produced; and, the moment his wonders passed beyond the narrow sphere in which deception was possible, they were completely foiled, and were compelled to own the superior power of his divinity.

Compare with this straightforward narrative the legends that Arabian fancy has gathered about it, with the feeling that it was too unadorned, too matter-of-fact, for the region of the supernatural: As soon as Moses had re-entered Egypt, an angel appeared to Aaron with a crystal cup of rare old wine; and, bid-

[33] Exod. vii. 22; viii. 7.

ding him drink it, he instantly carried him upon a winged horse across the Nile to meet his brother. The next day, as they stood before Pharaoh, the angel Gabriel, bursting through the ceiling, threw over Aaron a magnificent robe glittering with diamonds. When Moses flung down his staff, it was changed into a serpent as large as a camel, which at once lifted up the throne with Pharaoh on it, and threatened to swallow him and all his attendants, — the throne and the palace besides; but, when Moses took hold of the creature's tongue, it became a staff again. The wife of Pharaoh confessed her faith in the God of Moses; whereupon Pharaoh condemned her to death: but Gabriel appeared, and gave her a soothing antidote, and promised that she should be the wife of Mohammed in paradise. At the Red Sea, when Pharaoh was sinking in the waters, he began to cry out that he believed in God; but the angel Gabriel stopped his mouth with a handful of mire, and then his dead body was cast up on both shores, in turn, for a testimony. What a testimony are such legends for the truth of the biblical story!

Again: the wonders wrought by Moses were not private exhibitions in the presence of Pharaoh, but public calamities affecting the whole land. That they comported in part with natural phenomena, or made use of natural agencies, frees the narrative from the suspicion of exaggerating the supernatural, and gives a tone of reality to this reflection, in the highest sphere of miracle, of the physical conditions of Egypt. But these phenomena had three peculiarities that removed them from the plane of nature: (1) they were immediate and universal in their effects; (2) each

event took place according to the word of Moses, and at the lifting of the rod, — neither of which could have been a physical cause of any such event; and (3) the children of Israel, though intermingled with the Egyptians, were always exempted from the plagues. It is impossible to account for these characteristics on any other supposition than that of direct supernatural power producing the phenomena. To reject the phenomena is to reject the whole historical foundation of the national existence of the Israelites, and of their peculiar religious and commemorative institutions. It would be like blotting from the page of history the War of American Independence, and then attempting to account for the commemoration of such a myth upon the Fourth of July by the American people!

It should further be noted respecting these miracles, that they were never attempted by Moses in his own name, nor used to magnify his power, or to establish his claim to hero-worship; but were always wrought in the name and for the glory of Jehovah, the God of Israel. They were successively aimed, moreover, at those objects and powers of Nature which the Egyptians had deified. There can be no rational explanation of the book of Exodus which excludes from it the supernatural.

To the biblical account of the Exodus itself it has been objected that there is no mention of it in Egyptian history; but Egyptian history is as yet so far fragmentary, that the absence of any clear and positive reference to such an event need excite no surprise. Moreover, nations are not accustomed to record and commemorate their own disasters; and

where the history of a nation is made up almost entirely of pictorial and monumental chronicles of its kings, prepared by their order or that of their immediate successors, it is not likely that untoward events would find a place among the representations of victories and triumphant festivals. The galleries of Versailles exhibit the pictorial history of France in all its points of grandeur and triumph, but not in scenes of disaster. One sees there the coronation of Louis XVI., but not his decapitation; the victories of Napoleon, his marriage, his coronation, but not his defeat at Waterloo, nor his confinement at St. Helena; the coronation of Louis Philippe after the revolution of 1830, but not his flight from the revolution of 1848. Solferino is there; but neither the surrender of Louis Napoleon at Sedan, nor the crowning of William Emperor of Germany in the hall of mirrors, will ever find place upon those walls. The absence of any monument or record in Egyptian history, touching the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, would be no argument against the fact stated in the Hebrew Scriptures.

But that history is not altogether silent touching the Exodus of the Israelites. The confused accounts of the Hyksos and the lepers given by Manetho open a wide range of speculation, upon which we cannot now enter. Those accounts, at best, are brief and fragmentary, and come to us at second-hand, as quoted by Josephus against Apion, by Diodorus, and by other writers. Tacitus gives it as the most plausible conjecture, that the Jews were the lepers once expelled from Egypt; and the confused mention in Manetho of Jerusalem and Judæa, and

of Osarsiph, priest of Heliopolis, who afterwards took the name of Moses, shows a faint trace of the Hebrew Exodus upon the pages of Egyptian history.

Moreover, there is a *probable* identification of the Hebrews in sundry orders for rations to the *apuriu*, — workmen employed in building a fortified palace for Rameses.[34]

When Moses had led forth the Hebrews from Egypt, the great task of his life had only begun: the work of deliverance was to be followed by the work of organization. For this he had been trained in the school of Egypt, then the most perfect example of organized civil society; and the correspondences between the Mosaic institutes and the laws and customs of Egypt are so many and so close, as to leave no doubt that the mind of Moses was "impregnated with Egyptian memories." But though these correspondences show "a knowledge of Egypt so extensive and minute that nothing but a long residence among that exclusive people can explain it,"[35] and so are internal proofs of the historical truth of the narrative, yet the departures of Moses from his Egyptian model are of a character that difference him from all known teachers and legislators of antiquity. For, since the education of the Egyptians was exclusively in the hands of the priests, "if their

[34] The following is a specimen of these orders: "Give corn to the Egyptian soldiers, and to the *apuriu*, which draw stone for the great fortress of the palace of Rameses, beloved of Ammon." Chabas (*Mélanges Egyptologiques*, 1862, p. 42), Ebers (*Ægypten und die Bücher Moses*, I. 316), and Brugsch (*Zeitschrift fur Ægypt. Sprache*) agree in regarding the name *apuriu* as the Egyptian equivalent for *Ivrée*, the Hebrews. If this shall be confirmed, we then shall have positive Egyptian testimony to the fact of the Hebrews in Egypt, their servile employment at Rameses, and also a proximate date of the Exodus.

[35] See a fine argument in the Pentateuch, by Rev. W. Smith, Ph. D., the learned Roman-Catholic divine of Inzievar.

influence had determined the inward life of Moses, he would necessarily have spread their idolatry among the Jews; and yet he at once abolished all traces of it that had crept in among them. Just as little as Paul became an apostle in consequence of his Grecian education in Tarsus did Moses become the great founder of religion in consequence of the wisdom he had learned in Egypt." [36]

The analysis of the Mosaic legislation will fall properly to a subsequent lecture upon the Hebrew theocracy; but I may hint at these distinguishing features. Moses made no provision for a king, nor for classes, with the exception of the priesthood. He established a virtual democracy of landholders, based on the family; or a tribal fraternity, bound together by allegiance to Jehovah as the sovereign of the nation; and the stringency of certain ethical and religious precepts, and the severity of their penalties, were due to the fact that a breach of these was not only irreligion, but treason against the supreme authority, which all the more required to be felt because it was invisible. His system was humanizing throughout, and embodied the highest ideas of moral equality, rectitude, and benevolence for the practical intercourse of men. It was based upon principles that have survived all changes of polity.

His doctrine of God was not the mere reviving of the primitive Monotheism of Egypt; but his conception of the spirituality of God, the oneness of his being, the holiness of his character, and the universality of his dominion, was the purest and the loftiest that the mind of man has reached.

[36] Olshausen, Comm. on Acts vii. 22.

The Rabbi Salvador, with a pardonable enthusiasm for his race, has grouped around the standard of Israel the banners of the various nations that were her contemporaries at different stages of her political existence of seventeen centuries. "Those of India and Ethiopia might be represented by the words *priests*, *castes*, *mysteries:* to these Egypt added *science*, *industry;* Babylon, *luxury*, *pleasure;* Athens inscribed upon hers, *fine arts;* Sparta, *patriotism;* Sidon, Tyre, and Carthage, *commerce;* Rome, *war;* and many of these, also, *elysium*, *paradise*, *tartarus*, *hell*. But Israel wrote upon her standard, *the eternal*, *the people*, *and the law*, *justice*, *abundance*, *peace*.

"Solon magnified himself for having given to the Athenians better laws than they could bear. Moses did more: first he conceived *law* in its absolute sense; he marked out principles that belong to all times and all nations, which have their source in the nature of things, and which insure the satisfaction of all the real necessities of men; next he organized a people to conserve this law; and finally he dictated statutes adapted to the men who constituted that people, and conformed to times, places, and circumstances." [37]

All Hebrews were equals and brethren: the Hebrew was subjected only to the law, never to a person. Provision was made for universal education in laws, religion, and history; the spirit of patriotism was cultivated, and a horror of slavery and superstition; kindness to the poor and the stranger, respect for woman, honor to parents and to the aged, hospitality and liberality, were enjoined. Some posi-

[37] J. Salvador, *Histoire des Institutions de Moïse*, ii. 330.

tive institutions, and some social and moral precepts, were adopted or *adapted* from Egypt; but the Mosaic code applies to the constitution of man and of universal nature.

Moses ascribed this code either to direct divine revelation, or to the guidance of a divine illumination; and to suppose him guilty of imposture in this claim is to do violence to his whole character as it appears in the history. The principles of the decalogue, and the moral principles that underlie the Levitical code, so far transcend the known ethics of antiquity and the conceptions even of later philosophies, that a belief in the supernatural inspiration of Moses gives the only rational solution of their origin.

The same is true of the Mosaic cosmogony. Like the decalogue, this begins with the highest conception of God as a pure Spirit, whose will is creative and executive without demiurgic agencies. A conception which Plato and Socrates barely approximated — that of one infinite and eternal Spirit — is the very starting-point in the cosmogony and the theocracy traced by Moses. In his time the religion of Egypt had degenerated, and her institutions were based upon the belief in a plurality of gods; whereas the Mosaic code everywhere denounces this as a sin intolerable to the God of Israel. While the form of the Mosaic institutes is statutory and juridical, — and therefore they contain references to facts, usages, opinions, with which the people had been familiar in Egypt, — there underlie these forms certain moral principles of permanent interest and obligation; so that, in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ "filled out" (πληρῶσαι) the law as an ethical code from God himself.

The personality of Moses pervades his institutes, as the personality of Paul pervades his letters, — a personality which is itself pervaded, or rather infused, with the consciousness of the divine. The man and the polity, the character and the code, stand or fall together. The biography and the legislation are woven together, warp and woof, without seam. How grand the personality that could so embody itself in the ideas, the laws, the institutions, the worship, the memories, and the hopes of a nation whose religious belief in the one Jehovah as the one and only Deliverer has become the ineffaceable faith of humanity itself, as its ethical code is the fundamental law of civilized society and the concrete utterance of the universal conscience!

To extinguish the historical personality of Moses, one must blot out from history the Jewish nation, the memory of its ancient capital, its hallowed temple, its sacred rites: but these are an indestructible part of the world's history; and their record attests their origin, while their existence confirms the record. Take, for instance, that social festival, the *Purim*, which the Jews observe in the month Adar. We find mention of this in Josephus and other Jewish writers, and in the Talmud; and we can trace it back to the story of Haman and Mordecai in the time of the captivity, when Esther the queen ordained "that these days of *Purim* should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed."[38] The omission of this feast from the list in Leviticus, and from the historical and prophetic books prior to Esther, is an incidental mark of the greater

[38] Esth. ix. 26–32.

antiquity of these books. But the Passover we trace back through the period of the kings, and find at length, in the book of Exodus, an account of its origin inseparable from the origin of the nation itself, and both incorporated with the life of Moses. To obliterate Moses, therefore, we must obliterate these memorials of the nation in the laws and observances of nearly four thousand years, and then obliterate from the conscience of humanity itself the deep-wrought traces of the ten commandments.

This character, whose individuality we have traced through the vicissitudes of personal experience, whose development we have studied at the court and in the desert, whose efficiency we have marked in the diverse offices of deliverer and leader, and of founder and administrator, in the later scenes of the march to Canaan appears rounded up before us in the almost symmetrical blending of virtues and graces, with no one quality dominant through exaggeration; of *generous sympathies*, feeling the wrongs of his brethren as his own; of *quick instincts* to redress the injuries of others, careless of himself; of a *humility* so deep, that it shrank from accepting the highest honors proffered by God; of a *courage* so high, that it faced equally the power of Pharaoh, the perils of the sea and the wilderness, and the frenzy of the camp intoxicated with idolatry, or clamoring for food and drink; of a *meekness* that endured without retort the insolence of the people and the jealousy of Aaron and Miriam; and a *self-renunciation* that would forego honor, life itself, rather than the sinning people should be cut off; a *candor*, withal, that recorded his own failings; and a *faith* that triumphed over all failings

and all foes, through singleness of devotion to God. His continuance in his work when he knew he could not share its fruits, and his submission to the decree that excluded him from the land of promise, together with his humiliating record of the outburst of petulance and pride that provoked it, are without parallel in history. Well may we, as did Michael Angelo, set up this grandest figure of humanity with horns of divine light shooting from his head, and the tablets of the divine law clasped in his hand, and, casting away the mean implements by which we have sought to reproduce his image, bid him break the silence of the marble, and speak to us of God.

But what speech could be so eloquent as the silent, mysterious dignity of his death? His work accomplished, he gives his parting counsels, inaugurates his successor, and goes up alone into Nebo to die. The leader of three million souls has not so much as a body-guard to attend him with honor to his grave. Not even the faithful Joshua is with him to support his steps. He is going up to die: but Miriam, who watched over his little ark in the reeds of the Nile, will not be there to spread his couch with sisterly affection; nor Aaron, the high priest, to succor him with sympathy and prayer: both these he has laid to their rest in the desert. What thronging memories, what varying emotions, fill his mind as he turns his back upon the camp which has been the scene of so many wonders and trials! He remembers the banks of the Nile, where he grew up amid the palm-trees, and under the shadow of the Pyramids. He remembers the humble cottage of his mother, and how she charmed his childish ears with the story of Abraham

and of Joseph, and the promise made to Israel, and whispered of his own deliverance, and of her hope in him. He remembers the court of Pharaoh, and the honor and wealth that were open to him as an adopted son. He recalls his premature signal for the deliverance of his nation, and his own flight and exile in the desert. He sees again the bush that burns and is not consumed. He remembers the miracles in Egypt, the passover, the march, the passage of the Red Sea; he sees again the burning presence of Sinai, and the glory of Jehovah. The work of his life is accomplished: the word of the Lord is fulfilled. Often he pauses to look back upon the camp, and commend his flock to God. Yet he is neither sad nor troubled. He knows that God will care for them. He has nothing to fear for himself. His sin is forgiven, though God's testimony against it has not been withdrawn.

What strange experiences death shall bring, he knows not; but he who was alone with God on Sinai forty days does not fear to be alone with him on Pisgah. And yet how insignificant do all the great events of his life appear in the thought of that vast unknown he is about to enter! He is going up alone to die. The people in the plain follow him with strained vision and tearful eyes as he slowly climbs from crag to crag. Dimmer and dimmer grows that venerable form, till at length it is lost to view as Moses gains the western brow of Nebo.

But now he forgets the camp in the glorious prospect that opens before him. Northward he sees the future inheritance of Gilead, Dan, and Naphtali, the fruitful hills that skirt the great middle plain from the river to the sea, the winding current of the Jordan, and per-

chance, in that translucent atmosphere, the stately form of Hermon tipped with snow;[39] south of these, the vine-clad ridges of Ephraim and Manasseh, that stretch westward to the plain of Sharon; before him, all the land of Judah, with the cattle on its thousand hills, to where the blue of the mountains merges into the blue of the sea, or fades away into the haze of the desert. Directly at his feet lay Jericho, the city of palm-trees, and its well-watered plain, covered for miles with a rich variety of fruit and grain, flowing with milk and honey. Southward he beheld the vale of the Dead Sea, even unto Zoar. He looked over upon the hill where Abraham stood to plead for Sodom and Gomorrah. He called to remembrance the covenant with the father of the faithful, and felt anew the sure mercies of Jehovah.

What the Lord there said to Moses no man can know. Alone upon the top of Pisgah, when his limbs grew weary, and his eye grew dim, the God of his fathers, the God of the covenant, laid him gently to his rest. Scarce had he filled his soul with the vision of Canaan, when the veil of sense was taken away, and he beheld that glory which he had prayed to see at Sinai, but which no man can see, and live; and while his spirit entered the fellowship of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he joined again with Miriam in the song of redemption, the Lord cared for the body of his faithful servant, and laid it kindly by, though no man knoweth the place of his sepulchre. He knew then the meaning of his own words: "There is

[39] As no explorer has ascended Nebo to identify this view, or to say how much is actually included in the description given in Deut. xxxiv. 1–4, I have idealized somewhat views from neighboring heights.

none like unto God, who rideth through the heaven to thy help, and in his majesty through the clouds. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."[40]

Centuries later, upon a mountain in Northern Palestine, the veil was parted for a moment, and the glorified Moses stood beside the transfigured Christ; and to him is given an honor accorded to none other, as the redeemed stand upon the sea of glass, "having the harps of God, and sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb."

[40] Deut. xxxiii. 26.

III.

JOSHUA AND JUDGES; OR, THE HEROIC AGE OF ISRAEL.

BY REV. W. S. TYLER, D.D.

THE history of Israel divides itself into four periods, distinguished from each other not only chronologically, but in part, also, by geographical boundaries. They may be called the infancy, the childhood, the youth, and the manhood of the nation. The youth only comes directly within the scope of my theme; but it is necessary to premise something of the infancy and childhood. Born in Mesopotamia, and allied by blood and language to the Semitic family, Abraham was providentially called away from his polytheistic and idolatrous countrymen into Canaan, there to become the father of many nations, and the father of one nation especially, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed with the knowledge of the one living and true God, and the revelation of Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son. For three generations, the Hebrew patriarchs — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — sojourned as strangers in the land which was to be the inheritance of their posterity; living in tents, and wandering with their immense flocks and herds, and no inconsiderable troop of servants and

retainers, — very much as Arab shepherds and herdsmen now roam from plain to hillside, and hillside to mountain-top, in Syria and Mesopotamia, wherever, according to the changing seasons, they can best find pasturage and wells, or springs of water. Israel was then only a great family, or clan, with its patriarchal head; subdivided, however, into several households, and, with their servants and retainers, sufficiently numerous and powerful to wage war, and recover the prey from the hands of conquering kings and victorious armies. This may be called the infancy of the Hebrew people. It was passed, as they believed, and as the Scriptures teach, under the special guidance and protection of Heaven; God himself being their father and friend, talking with the patriarchs face to face, and leading the people like a flock: while they, in turn, wherever they went, set up altars for his worship; and these altars which they reared to the worship of the true God, and the wells which they dug to water their flocks, and some of which remain to this day, beautiful symbols of their religious faith and life, were their only title to the land in which they sojourned.

Scarcely had the people thus passed their infancy, when the same wise and kind Providence which had hitherto guided and protected them sent them to school in Egypt, whose priests and sages were then the teachers of Western Asia, as they afterwards taught the Greeks and Romans, — the wisest and most powerful European nations. Here they dwelt on the eastern frontier, with an outlook, as it were, ever towards the promised land; separate, for a time at least, from the Egyptians, so as not to be involved in

their polytheism and idolatry, yet near enough to be instructed in all the wisdom of Egypt. Here, like the Greeks and the Romans, they learned architecture from the builders of the pyramids, temples, and tombs; so that, in after-times, the temples at Memphis and Thebes became the models after which they planned and built the temple at Jerusalem. Here they learned more or less of agriculture; so that, when they returned to take possession of the land of promise, they were not only a pastoral, but also an agricultural people, and cultivated the vine and the olive, the fig and the pomegranate, also the onions and cucumbers of Egypt. Here they were taught the arts of carving, engraving, embroidery, and all the arts of peace; so that, even in the wilderness, they could construct the tabernacle with its handiwork, and furnish it with its altars, tables, candlesticks, and other utensils. Here they learned more of the art of war, of which they were previously not ignorant, and thus were able to gain a victory over the Amalekites soon after they entered upon their journeyings in the desert. Here, perhaps, they were taught the letters of the alphabet, which they afterwards enjoyed in common with the Phœnicians and other Canaanites; and not only enjoyed, but improved, — making the letters, which were before partly hieroglyphic, wholly the representatives of sounds, and thus transmitting them to the Greeks, and through them to the modern European nations; for that the letters of the Egyptian, the Greek, the Roman, and the modern European alphabets, all had a common origin, is evident from their names and their early forms. Here they became acquainted with the religion of the Egyptians, and

were more or less influenced by it both in the way of attraction and repulsion, so as, under divine direction and the legislation of Moses, to appropriate whatever was true and beautiful and good in their religious faith and service; while at the same time they were taught to reject their degrading superstitions, — their worship of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. The last lesson which they were taught in Egypt — taught by the providence and word of God, through the mouth and hand of Moses — was the infinite superiority, the sole and supreme sovereignty, of the true God, — the God that made the heavens, — over the Nile, the sacred bull, and all the other objects of Egyptian idolatry, — a superiority and a sovereignty demonstrated by the visitation of the ten plagues on these very objects one after another, and the bringing-out of the people from this school (which had now become a house of bondage), by means so suitable to the country, that the same sort of visitations constitute the plagues of Egypt to this day, and so grafted upon the course of nature, that they are in an important sense natural; yet so extraordinary in their power and time, and manner of occurrence, that they must have been supernatural; and so marvellous in their results, reaching down through the ages, that a miraculous interposition was not only justified and deserved, but imperatively demanded.

Then the chosen people, now become a nation, were sent to finish their education by receiving the law at Mount Sinai, and by their wanderings in the wilderness. Of the suitableness and impressiveness of this school, no one can doubt who has once set

foot in the desert, — the solitude, the silence, undisturbed by so much as the shaking of a leaf, or the rustling of an insect's wing; the utter absence of life and motion; not a sight, not a sound, not so much as a breath of any living, moving creature; not a sign of life, animal or vegetable, within the range of one's aching, craving senses; nothing but the breathing of one's own lungs and the beating of one's own heart and pulse, till at length it seems as if these would be suspended. It is common to find proofs of the divine being and agency in the various forms of *animated* existence: but if you would *feel* the existence and presence of God in every fibre of your body, as well as every faculty of your soul, you must go out into the solitude and silence of the desert; it is an awful void, which can be filled only with God.

After journeying two or three months amid such impressive solitudes, inhabited only by God, relieved, however, by occasional fountains and palm-groves and oases of verdant beauty and richness, which, in contrast, taught them no less impressively their dependence on his love and care, they pitched their camp in a plain which opens as a broad rent or chasm in the very midst of the bald, bare, precipitous, lofty, and frowning ridges and peaks of the mountains of Sinai, — the Alps in their sublime and awful grandeur, but stripped of the pastures and forests that adorn the sides of the Swiss mountains, and from base to summit one unrelieved, uninterrupted mass of bare, rugged, scarred and furrowed, towering and overhanging, rocks. And there, amid thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes, or immediately after these had ceased, they received those ten commandments, which they pre-

served ever after with religious care and reverence, and which, transmitted by them, have been read in the churches and taught in the families of every nation in Christendom as an epitome of the whole law of God and the whole duty of mankind. It required forty years of special training and severe discipline in the wilderness to purge away the errors and vices which they brought with them out of the land of Egypt, and which were in part, perhaps, the fruit of their servile condition there. Indeed, one whole generation passed away under this discipline; so that, with the exception of two individuals (Joshua and Caleb), none who came out of Egypt entered the land of Canaan; and a generation remained who retained, of course, the knowledge acquired in Egypt, but whose characters were formed under this severe discipline in this special divine school. Thus the school-days of Israel drew to a close; and their childhood ended with their wandering in the great desert between Egypt and Palestine.

In their youth they entered the land of Canaan, conquered the nations and tribes whom they found there, took possession of the greater part of their country, and established in it their theocratic form of government, their peculiar civil and religious institutions. During all the three periods which we have called the infancy, the childhood, and the youth of the nation, the government was a pure theocracy, without king or president, with no sovereign but God, and no regularly-constituted rulers or commanders under him, except those patriarchs, chiefs of tribes, and heads of families, who were their natural leaders, and such lawgivers, captains, and judges as

he raised up from time to time to be the organs of his will and the instruments of their deliverance.

Under the government of the kings, the nation passed its manhood; displaying the fulness and freshness of manly vigor, however, only under the earlier kings; declining, and passing into the decay of age, in their subjection to the Assyrians, Persians, and Greeks; and dying a violent but heroic death in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

As written in the Sacred Scriptures, the history of the infancy is given in the book of Genesis, which glances also at the genesis of the world and the origin of other early nations; the history of the childhood is given in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; that of the youth, in the books of Joshua and Judges; and that of the manhood, in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles; illuminated as with photogenic pictures, drawn by the light of heaven, in the books of the prophets.

My subject is Joshua and Judges; or, the heroic age of Israel. But the youth of a nation, as of an individual, cannot be understood, cannot be seen in its true light, without some reference to its childhood and infancy, and its early training and education: hence these preliminary remarks. The acorn from which our oak sprang was manifestly of Semitic origin; and the tree which we are now to see transplanted to the land of Canaan bears unequivocal marks of having been previously rooted and nourished in the soil of Egypt, and amid the rocks and sands of the Sinaitic peninsula. Egypt and Sinai are the background on which the whole history and life of the chosen people in the Holy Land are pro-

jected. We cannot, therefore, be surprised to find the books of Joshua and Judges in close, vital connection with the Pentateuch. Indeed, the same is more or less true of all the subsequent books of the Old Testament; so that there is not less of history and palpable verity than there is of poetry and prophecy in the language of one of the prophets, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son."

Joshua was born and bred in Egypt, educated and matured in Sinai and the wilderness, and thus fitted to conquer so grandly and rule so wisely in Palestine. The tabernacle which Moses constructed in the wilderness, and Joshua set up in Shiloh, was a kind of cross between an Arab tent and an Egyptian temple, resembling the former in its materials and general structure, but planned and shaped also much like the latter, and thus fitted to be the model of the temple at Jerusalem. The ark of the covenant, which was enshrined in the tabernacle, and which was the oracle and guide of the people in taking possession of the land, may be seen to this day, in its exact form and size, on the monuments of Egypt; and was made of the wood of the acacia, which still grows in the Great Desert. And so all the instruments and ceremonies of their worship were appointed indeed of God, but not chosen or made irrespective of their previous history and changing circumstances. The modern traveller who goes from Egypt by Sinai to Palestine, reading the sacred story as he journeys, feels all the way that he is treading in the footsteps of the chosen people; and as every step of his travels sheds light on the sacred page, so he finds no guide-book like the Bible to illustrate and illumine his own journeyings from day to day.

So when one comes to the banks of the Jordan over against Jericho, and swims the rapid stream, as I myself did, and recrosses it by fording with difficulty a little lower down, and stretches out his hand to save a companion who has lost his foothold and is just ready to be swept away by the current, he finds it all just as it is described in the book of Joshua. Certainly an eye-witness could not describe it better. Here, on the one hand, projected against the eastern horizon, smooth, regular, and clean-cut as a well-trimmed hedge, rise the mountains of Moab, from which the people emerged, and on one of whose summits their great lawgiver died in full sight of the Canaan which he was not permitted to enter; there, on the other side, westward, are the rugged mountains and deep valleys of the goodly land, flowing with milk and honey, in which the patriarchs had sojourned, and which the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had promised to give to their posterity in that very generation. Here is the river, about twenty yards wide, and now[1] not more than three or four feet deep at the ford, but hidden, for the most part, beneath steep, overhanging banks, and rushing on down its rapid descent towards the Dead Sea with a current far too strong even now to be safely crossed by a miscellaneous crowd of men, to say nothing of women and children;[2] and there are the higher banks, or terraces, which will be reached by the swollen stream when Jordan goes over all his banks, in time of harvest; and yonder, far away, at the

[1] In the month of February, which was the time of my visit to the Jordan.

[2] Pilgrims are drowned almost every year as they bathe at this ford of the Jordan.

very sources of the river, glittering in the sunlight, towers Mount Hermon, covered with the snows, whose melting, by the same sun which ripens the harvest in April and May, will cause the overflow. Surely, if that multitude of men, women, and children, who stand waiting on the other side, are to cross the river, thus swollen to a flood, and overflowing its banks, in time of harvest, they need a miracle; and, if ever a miracle were to be performed, it would be to let that people pass over who are intrusted with the knowledge of the true God and the keeping of his law, not for themselves only, but for mankind. The sacred writer says, "And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant," — that is, the tables on which were written the ten commandments, — "as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest), that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho." Thus reads our history. And I am prepared to believe it; for, in the first place, the fact is well attested and corroborated by monuments. Twelve stones taken out of the bed of the river, and set up near its bank, were still standing, when our history was written, to attest the miracle; and the history itself is expressly declared to have been written, in part at least, while some of the leading actors

in these scenes were still living.[3] In the second place, the end to be accomplished for the chosen people and for the human race was sufficiently great to justify and demand the necessary means; and a miracle, provided only that it is well attested, and imperatively demanded by some great moral and spiritual emergency, is just as credible as any other event. A miracle, under these conditions, demands our belief far more than those strange and abnormal events which are constantly occurring, and which even the most incredulous readily believe when supported by sufficient evidence, although they may be utterly unable to comprehend either their physical or their final causes.

Do you ask how this miracle was wrought? I do not know; for the sacred writer has not told us. It may have been wholly supernatural; it may possibly have been wholly natural; or it may have been partly natural, and partly supernatural. The effect *could* have been produced by natural causes; and therefore is not *incredible*, even from the standpoint of the rationalist. I do not believe that it was so produced. But it *could* have been. An earthquake could have produced the effect. Earthquakes have often changed the course of rivers, and dried up streams at their sources. An earthquake, suddenly heaving and swelling the bed of the Jordan over against Jericho,

[3] Josh. vi. 25: "And she [Rahab] dwelleth in Israel unto this day." I have no space to discuss the question of documents ("Elohistic," "Jehovistic," &c.), of which German rationalists and their followers, with as little taste and good sense as modesty and reverence, write as confidently as if they had the manuscripts in their possession. Like those critics who would annihilate Homer, they differ so entirely as to the number, character, and age of these documents, that they neutralize each other. When any two of them agree on these points, then perhaps they may be quoted as authority.

would have turned back the waters above towards their source, and sent those below rushing with unwonted rapidity down to the Dead Sea, leaving the channel dry. How absurd, then, to say that such an event is impossible! It was not impossible at any time. At that time, and under those circumstances, with such a people, and such interests for mankind at stake, it was not improbable. Modest men, or, which is the same thing, wise men well read in the annals of history, will be slow to say that any thing is impossible; and men who are capable of entering into the history and spirit of the Israelites, and the ends which they were raised up to accomplish and have accomplished in the world, — and this kind of sympathy, and capacity of appreciation, is confessedly the first qualification of an historian and a critic, — such men will feel in their inmost souls that such a miracle, under such circumstances, was both possible and probable, — possible even according to natural laws, and probable according to the intuitive laws of belief and of the human mind.

Do you ask how it happened that the earthquake (*supposing for the moment* that an earthquake was the agency employed) took place just at the time when the Israelites were waiting to pass over? How did it happen that a tempest arose just at the right time to destroy the Spanish Armada? How did it happen that a storm at sea dispersed the powerful French fleet bound for the capture of Louisburg, and thus saved America to the English, and their descendants the people of these United States? How did it happen that the River Strymon, suddenly freezing over just as the retreating army of Xerxes reached

its banks, afforded a safe passage for a few early in the morning, but, as suddenly thawing and breaking up the next day, drowned whole ranks and squadrons, — "man upon man in crowded ruin," as Æschylus says in his "Persai," — and, thus completing the destruction of the hosts of Xerxes, saved sacred Greece forever from the invasions of Asiatic barbarism? How has it happened so often in the history of wars and battles, that the relative position of the sun or the rising moon, or perchance an eclipse of either of these heavenly bodies, occurring at the nick of time, and working on the superstitious feelings of the soldiers, has turned the scale in some decisive battle of far-reaching influence? History is full of such coincidences. Nothing happens in this world. God's hand is in history. He who disbelieves in providence — the pantheist, the atheist even — cannot deny a kind of destiny that is just as remarkable as providence. Even if things *do* happen, no one can deny that they happen in marvellous ways, bringing about what men instinctively call miracles.[4]

Of course, *I* do not feel the need of such arguments and illustrations. I believe in God and providence

[4] The question now in dispute between Pantheism and Theism is essentially the same as that between the development theory and the commonly-received doctrine. The gist of that question is, whether the world was made (or existed from eternity) in some gaseous or chaotic state, which contained in itself the germs of all actual and possible phenomena, so that they develop themselves spontaneously, without the necessity of any divine interposition; or whether He who made the world still pervades, directs, and controls it with an omnipresent and all-wise agency. I am far from being indifferent to this question. All my instincts and intuitions, as well as my religious faith, revolt against the development theory and the Pantheistic theory in all its forms. But this question does not come within the scope of my subject. The whole design of the argument in the text is, to show that our history, wonderful as it is, *can be true*, according to either theory; that, according to the lowest doctrine of divine agency, the book of Joshua is not an incredible narrative of events that never did happen, and never could have come to pass.

and a supernatural revelation; in a God who created the world, presides over all creatures, and orders all events; who has revealed himself to us through Jesus Christ, his Son; and will one day, through him, raise the dead, and judge the world. For myself, the argument of Paul is quite sufficient, quite unanswerable: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" I believe, as we are taught by the great Teacher, that, with God, all things are possible. He that made the world can and will govern it. He that made the river can divide it for his people to pass over dryshod. For the believer, these arguments and illustrations are quite unnecessary. At the same time, they may possibly help those who have not this faith. They are certainly sufficient to show, that to deny the *possibility* of miracles is as unhistorical, uncritical, and unphilosophical as it is unbelieving and unchristian, not to say atheistical and profane. Theologians are sometimes sufficiently assuming: but these sciolists, who deny the possibility of miracles, far exceed them in arrogance; they arrogate to themselves the knowledge and power of which they rob the Almighty.

Thus introduced into the promised land, animated by the voice of God, guided and strengthened by his hand, and led on by a mysterious and usually invisible personage who declares *himself* to be the *captain* of the Lord's host, Joshua and his people now advance by a series of rapid marches and victories to the conquest of the country. Jericho, the city of palm-trees, a wealthy capital and stronghold, with walls "high and fenced up to heaven," amid magnificent palm-groves, watered by inexhaustible fountains, the mis-

tress of the valley by its power, and by its situation, "at the entrance of the two main passes into the central mountains," "the key of Western Palestine,"[5] — Jericho was necessarily the first object of their attack. Compassed about by the priests bearing the ark of God, and the people blowing trumpets and horns for seven days in succession, and seven times on the seventh day, the walls of the city fell down flat before their faces; and, entering without resistance, they took possession of the terror-stricken city: a story which we are apt to think sufficiently marvellous, possibly in its rams'-horns; a little ludicrous, also, in our accidental early associations. Doubtless it is ranked by sceptics among the most incredible of the Bible miracles. And yet it *could* have been the effect of natural causes. An earthquake has often produced similar and even greater effects. It is, therefore, not incredible on purely naturalistic grounds; and if we accept in its lowest form the idea of a divine plan in history, and a Divine Providence presiding over the destinies of nations, what more probable than that so peculiar a people, manifestly called to know the one living God, and make him known among the nations, should have been taught in this unique and striking way, at the very beginning of their career of conquest, the great lesson, that it was not by their own wisdom or might, but by the power and blessing of God, that they were to accomplish so magnificent, so truly divine, a mission?

At Ai, a small town about ten miles from Jericho, "at the head of the ravines running up from the Valley of the Jordan," which they expected to find an

[5] Stanley, Hist. of the Jewish Church.

easy prey, they met with a temporary repulse, till they were taught the great lesson of honesty towards each other, and fidelity to God, in the use of their spoils. Then Ai and Bethel fell into their hands.

The battle of Beth-horon, or Gibeon, soon followed, — a battle which Dean Stanley justly compares with those of Marathon and Cannæ, where Greek culture and Roman civilization hung on the issue; and those great battles in later times, — "that of the Milvian Bridge, which involved the fall of Paganism; that of Poitiers, which sealed the fall of Arianism; that of Tours, which checked the spread of Mahometanism in Western Europe; that of Lepanto, which checked it in Eastern Europe; that of Lutzen, which determined the balance of power between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Germany." Nay, it might justly be exalted above all these in the importance of its issue; for on it was suspended that religion of the Bible which is now the religion of the civilized world. Five confederate kings, or chiefs, with the king of Jebus, or Jerusalem, at their head, combined their forces against Joshua; but, marching all night, he fell suddenly upon them, put them instantly to flight, and pursued them with great slaughter. A storm of hail, with great hailstones, suddenly arising, completed their discomfiture, and proved more fatal to them than the spears and swords of the Israelites. All day long continued the hurried flight, the hot pursuit, and the dreadful slaughter; and, lest the day should not be sufficiently long for the complete destruction of the confederate hosts, —

"Then spake Joshua to the Lord,
In the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites
Before the children of Israel;
Then he said, in the sight of Israel,
Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
And thou, Moon, in the Valley Ajalon.
And the sun stood still,
And the moon staid,
Until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies."

"Is not this written in the book of Jasher?"

"So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven,
And hasted not to go down about a whole day.[6]
And there was no day like that, before or after it,
That the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man;
For the Lord fought for Israel.
And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him,
Unto the camp, to Gilgal."

For myself, I have no intrinsic difficulty in accepting this as simple matter of fact, true in the fullest and most literal sense when interpreted according to the common laws of language. There is more than one way in which He who made the heavens could make the sun and moon appear to stand still without any apparent violation of natural laws.[7]

[6] Or "after the day was finished."—*Milman's Hist. of the Jews*, vol. i. p. 268.

[7] Bishop Colenso's note on this subject (the Pentateuch, and book of Joshua, p. 9, New-York edition) is a most extraordinary specimen of "the minute philosopher:" "If the earth's motion were suddenly stopped," he says, "a man's *feet* would be arrested while his *body* was moving at the rate (on the equator) of a thousand miles an hour!" As if He who had stopped the earth's motion, and arrested his *feet* (for that is the supposition), could not and would not, of course, arrest his *body* also! Again he says, "The arresting of the earth's motion, while it might cause the appearance of the sun 'standing still,' would not account for the moon 'staying.'" Why not? Surely these must be what Paul meant when he exhorted Timothy to avoid "oppositions of science falsely so called."

And the Bible always describes natural phenomena as they *appear*, and in the language of the people, not according to the doctrine or the language of physical science. But this passage is expressly cited from a book of poems, the book of Jasher. The language also is metrical, and admits of being arranged in the form of verses. It has the parallelism and the other characteristic marks of Hebrew poetry; and, irrespective of their theological opinions, critics now generally agree to read it as a poetical quotation. It must therefore be interpreted, not as prose, but as poetry; not as a part of the narrative by the sacred historian, but as a fragment from some Hebrew bard, cited by way of embellishment. And, so interpreted, it means, perhaps, no more than this: So long did the day seem to those who were engaged in the conflict, and so complete was the destruction of the enemies of Israel, that, in the strong and bold language of a contemporary poet, it might be said the sun and moon stood still in the heavens, and the day was prolonged far beyond its usual duration, till the confederate host was utterly extinguished. So, in the song of Deborah, it is said that "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera;" upon which no one would think of putting any other than a poetical interpretation. And "when Isaiah prayed to the Lord in the name of his people, 'Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence!' or when David sings, 'In my distress I called upon the Lord; . . . he heard my voice out of his temple; . . . he bowed the heavens also, and came down; . . . he sent from above, and took me; he drew me out of many waters,' — who is there who

ever thinks of understanding their words literally, as denoting an actual rending the heavens, or a desire that God would actually descend from heaven, and stretch out his hand to draw David out of the water?"[8]

If any of my hearers doubt the possibility of a hail-storm producing such effects as are ascribed to that which helped to consummate the victory at Beth-horon, let them read Commodore Porter's account of the hail-storm which fell upon him when navigating the Bosphorus in a caique in 1831. They raised their umbrellas for their protection, and the hailstones stripped them to ribbons. They crawled under a bullock's hide for shelter: still his right hand was disabled; his companion received a blow in the leg; one of the oarsmen had his hand literally smashed; another was wounded in the shoulder; his servants were both disabled, and afterwards laid up with their wounds; and every person on board was more or less injured. A ball of ice as large as two fists struck an oar and split it, and the boat was terribly bruised. Reaching home, he found that his porter, who had ventured an instant out of doors, had been knocked down by a hailstone; and, had they not dragged him in by the heels, would have been battered to death. Two boatmen were killed in the upper part of the village; and he heard of broken bones in abundance. "I have been in action," says the commodore, "and seen death and destruction around me in every shape of horror;

[8] Keil, Comm. on Joshua, p. 266, Clark's edition. Keil, Davidson, Dean Stanley, Dean Milman, and the modern critics generally, justly remark, that we do not meet with a single reference to these verses of the book of Joshua in any part of the Old or New Testament, — a silence quite inexplicable, if they really relate the occurrence of a miracle the most extraordinary in the whole Bible.

but I never before had the feeling of awe which seized upon me on this occasion. . . . Imagine the heavens suddenly frozen over, and as suddenly broken to pieces, in irregular masses of from half a pound to a pound weight, and precipitated to the earth! My own servants weighed several pieces of three-quarters of a pound, and many were found by others of upwards of a pound." The ground was covered with such masses of ice; the trees were stripped of their leaves and limbs; windows were shattered, and roof-tiles smashed to atoms. It is not difficult to conceive the effect, physical and mental, of such a hailstorm as this on an army already routed, and fleeing for their lives.

After so signal a victory, nothing could stand before Joshua and the armies of Israel. The cities of the south country now fell into his hands in rapid succession, as fast as he could present himself before them. Numerous kings and nations in Northern Palestine united their forces against him; but Joshua and his people of war fell upon them suddenly near the sources of the Jordan: "And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the Valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them till they left none remaining."

Thirty-one kings did Joshua thus overthrow on the west side of Jordan, besides those which had been previously conquered on the east side; for in Canaan then, as later in Greece and Italy, every city was an independent state, each petty ruler a king, — or sheik, as he would now be called in the East, — and almost every mountain or valley a kingdom.

After the conquest of the country, the next thing was the distribution of it among the tribes according to the number of their families, so that each family might have its proper and inalienable share in the land which the Lord their God had given them. The whole territory was not larger than the State of Massachusetts; and the share of each tribe scarcely so large, upon an average, as a single county in the Old Bay State. Voltaire, and others like him, have made the smallness of their territory a ground of objection, of ridicule and contempt. But like Phœnicia, Athens, and ancient Rome, like England and Massachusetts herself in modern history, the influence of Israel did not depend upon its territory or its population. Small states, and those not planted on the richest soil, have always exerted the most potent influence on the destinies of mankind. The conquest of England by the Saxons, and then again by the Normans, abounds in illustrations of the conquest and partition of Palestine by the Israelites; and the latter part of the book of Joshua has been called often the Doomsday Book of the Land of Canaan.

The cruelty of the Israelites in the treatment of the conquered kings, and their persistent efforts in accordance with the divine command to extirpate the native inhabitants, have, with better reason, been made a ground of reproach. Such modes of warfare certainly could not be justified in our day. They do not accord with our standard of humanity and religion. But the traveller who has seen the heaps of mutilated hands and feet and ears, and the other monstrous and gigantic barbarities, which form so conspicuous a feature on the monuments of Egypt, will see that such

were the lessons which the Israelites were taught in the school of their childhood: such everywhere were the manners and customs of the age. In fact, so far from going beyond, the Israelites fell short of the cruelties which were then commonly practised by the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Phœnicians, and all the most civilized nations of antiquity. In the second place, the severities practised upon these kings were in many cases expressly a judicial infliction; a just retribution on the principle common to all ancient law, of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; a just retribution for the greater cruelties which they boasted that they had themselves inflicted on others. In the third place, the natives whom they were commanded to extirpate offered human sacrifices, cast their children into the fire, were false to their plighted word (like the Carthaginians, who were of Canaanitish origin, and whose Punic faith was a by-word), were worshippers of Moloch, Baal, and Astarte (the Oriental Venus), and mingled cruelty and licentiousness with their horrid forms of idolatry. At the time of Joshua, they had carried these crimes against human nature to such a pitch, that, in the language of the Bible, "the iniquity of the Canaanites was now full." Indeed, Sodom and Gomorrah, as they were when they were destroyed, were no exaggerated specimen of what the whole population of the country had now become. And after enumerating incest, sodomy, bestiality, licentiousness in all its most unnatural forms, God by the mouth of Moses says unto Israel, "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things; for in *all these* the nations are defiled which I cast out before you. And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity

thereof upon it, and *the land itself vomiteth out its inhabitants*." In short, the people were not only ripe for destruction: they were rotten to the core. Morally speaking, they could not be converted. They were past reformation. Extermination was the only alternative. For to let them remain, was inevitably, as human nature is, to infect the Israelites with their idolatry and corruption, and thus to defeat the very end which had been sought for centuries in all the previous history of God's peculiar people. If you ask for proof of this, you can see a demonstration of it in the fact, that, after all their efforts to drive out and root out the inhabitants, the portion that remained were constantly enticing them into idolatry. And in the language of Dr. Arnold, who was no fanatic, "It is better that the wicked should be destroyed a hundred times over than that they should tempt those who are as yet innocent to join their company. Let us but think what might have been our fate and the fate of every other nation under heaven, at this hour, had the sword of the Israelites done its work more sparingly. . . . The Israelites' sword did a work of *mercy* for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world. . . . In these contests, on the fate of these nations of Palestine, the happiness of the human race depended."

The religion of the Old Testament, and the same is equally true of the religion of the New Testament, has no fellowship with the sickly, sentimental school of philanthropists, whose sympathies are all expended on the wolves, or at best on the *goats*, let what will become of the sheep and lambs. At the same time, it is equally remote from that "inhumanity to man"

with which it has sometimes been charged by reason of its severe, uncompromising, and exclusive spirit. It *is* severe: so are truth and righteousness severe. It *is* uncompromising: so is every thing that is holy, just, and good. It *is* exclusive; but it excludes nothing but error, falsehood, and sin. It cuts off and casts out whoremongers, adulterers, idolaters, and all liars; but it never cuts off nor casts out foreigners *as* such, irrespective of their character and religion. On the contrary, in the very spirit of the golden rule, and with a humanity as remarkable as its piety, the law of Israel says, over and over again, "The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." Beautiful logic! well worthy to be repeated; for it is the very logic and ethics of the gospel; and it is enforced by all the authority of Jehovah, the God of Israel. "*Thou shalt love him as thyself;* FOR *ye were strangers in the land of Egypt:* I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD." And the history of Israel, so far from renouncing strangers as such, pronounces Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, "blessed above women," — thus anticipating the blessedness announced by the angel to the Virgin Mary; and it reckons Rahab the Canaanitish woman, and Ruth the Moabitess, among the ancestry of David, and of the Messiah himself.

Two scenes in the civil and religious history of Joshua invest him with a moral grandeur transcending that of his military achievements. The first was the solemn recognition of the divine law, according to the command of Moses, on Mounts Ebal and Geri-

zim. As soon as the way was opened by some of his earlier conquests, Joshua led the people to that narrow but rich and beautiful valley, perhaps the most beautiful in all Palestine, the Valley of Shechem, enclosed on either side by lofty mountains, and replenished with perpetual verdure by numerous springs of unfailing water; and there, on the lower slopes of Ebal and Gerizim, where the mountains approach nearest each other, with six tribes standing on Mount Ebal to pronounce the curses, and six on Mount Gerizim to repeat the blessings, — there Joshua read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law of Moses; and all the people, with loud voices sounding across the valley, and echoing from cliff to cliff, shouted "Amen!" "There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant with them." So says the sacred historian, with a simplicity and a boldness which neither fears nor suspects criticism; and I envy not the minute critics, who, like Bishop Colenso, can stand up and deny the possibility of such a transaction, or even coolly criticise so sacred and sublime a spectacle. By reverting to the book of Deuteronomy, it will be seen that it is only twelve verses of curses, and then a single chapter of blessings and curses, which Moses commanded to be rehearsed from these mountains in the hearing of all the people; not as the bishop and the like of him would have us understand the whole Pentateuch. This was a task which a single day would amply suffice to accomplish. And when the historian says,

"There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before *all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones*," common candor and common sense dictate how the words are to be understood; viz., that the whole nation (men, women, and children) were there to take part, directly or indirectly, in person or by their representatives, in the solemn transaction. As to the bishop's arithmetical computation how many acres and square miles such a congregation would require to stand on, and his inference that it was impossible for them ever to be gathered before the tabernacle of the congregation, and there instructed out of the law,—I have not the patience to dwell on such petty and petulant calculations. Pray, how did the Roman commanders ever address their vast armies, or the Athenian orators speak to the people of Athens? Why not demonstrate the impossibility of Daniel Webster's ever having addressed the people of Boston in Faneuil Hall, because, forsooth, that hall is not big enough to hold them? Why has no one ever shown up the absurdity of Pres. Lincoln's ever having addressed the people of the United States in his inaugural, because they could not find room to stand on in the whole city of Washington?[9] Do such critics most resemble moles blindly burrowing in the earth, or owls that see nothing in the light of day, but prowl about for their prey

[9] When the whole congregation is represented as appearing before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle, it is often by their *representatives*, the elders; and, in the original Hebrew, the very word which in these passages is rendered *congregation* in the English version, properly denotes that representative body.—See Dr. Benisch's Critical Examination of Bishop Colenso's Objections, &c. This learned and candid Jewish rabbi shows that a large part of the bishop's objections proceed from misapprehension and ignorance of the *Hebrew* Scriptures.

in the night? or are they most like vultures, whose delight is to feed on dead carcasses, but they care not if they tear the living flesh in their search for carrion?

At length, Joshua drew near to the end of his long and noble life. Like Washington and Wellington, with both of whom he has been compared, the veteran soldier had already, for several years, withdrawn from active service to his Mount Vernon (viz., Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim), which a grateful people had given him for his inheritance, after he had conquered and divided among them their several possessions, and where, in his retirement, they still looked up to him as their counsellor and protector, their oracle and guide. And now the hour of his departure was at hand; but he could not die without addressing some farewell counsels and warnings to the people whom he had so long borne, as it were, in his hand and on his heart, and, in the spirit at once of a father, a seer, and a sage, bringing them to renew their solemn covenant with God.

Assembling the whole people again at Shechem, in that same "central valley of the hills of Ephraim which commands the view of the Jordan Valley on the east, and the sea on the west," where, between Ebal and Gerizim, they had some years previous responded their loud amen to the blessings and curses of the law, he gives them his farewell address. He reviews their whole history, in which he had acted so prominent a part. But he takes no credit to himself. Losing sight of himself, as every truly great and good man does, he speaks to them only in the name of the Lord their God. He addresses no flattering words, no idle compliments, to the people. He points out to

them faithfully all their weaknesses, their difficulties, and their dangers. He enumerates to them the victories which God had given them, — "not with thy sword and thy bow," — and describes the goodly land into which he had brought them, — "a land for which ye did not labor, and cities which ye built not, and vine-yards and olive-yards which ye did not plant. Now, therefore," such is his legitimate and wise conclusion, — "now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord," he says, — stating a supposition, and giving them an alternative, which, under the circumstances, could hardly seem otherwise than monstrous and preposterous, — "choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose lands ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods! We also will serve the Lord; for he is our God. . . . So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord," — the oldest sanctuary of the patriarchs, reaching back even to the days of Abraham and Melchisedec.[10] "And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a

[10] Not the tabernacle; for that was in Shiloh, while this was in Shechem. — See Stanley's History of the Jewish Church, p. 310.

witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God. And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being a hundred and ten years old. . . . And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that he had done for Israel." No ordinary history this, of no ordinary people; and how fitly and simply it concludes with this extraordinary obituary of this extraordinary man!

"The servant of the Lord"! Such was his epitaph. Such was his true character. It was a maxim of one of the seven wise men of Greece, "Whatever good thing you do, ascribe it to the gods." With all his wisdom and skill, with all his courage and strength, Joshua was a simple, unquestioning, unhesitating soldier and servant of the only living and true God. From him he received all his orders; to him he ascribed all his achievements. The highest leaders and benefactors of mankind have always felt that they were but the instruments of a higher power. Great men, like Napoleon, may have called it destiny; but wise and good men like Socrates, even among the heathen, have chosen to call it Providence and God. In driving the Canaanites before him like a tempest, in sweeping them off the earth like the plague, Joshua felt himself to be only an instrument of Divine Providence, only an executioner of the Divine Will. "He moved amidst these scenes of blood as an avenging angel might hover over them, — a doer of the will of the Holy One, untainted by human pas-

sion, and full, even in his most unswerving zeal for God, of a terrible gentleness. We read this character in his fatherly sympathy with the offending Achan, even whilst he condemned to be burnt with fire the great transgressor who had brought himself and his under the ban of his God."[11] Stern as a judge, and yet loving as a mother, he pronounces sentence on the offender like the Roman Brutus, and yet pities him as David does his erring "son." Even so the God of Israel cries, "How can I give thee up, Ephraim?" at the same time that he *does* give up his apostate and rebellious people to captivity, and their land to desolation. Gentle as a lamb, but courageous as a lion, he resembles in character Him who was at once "the Lamb of God" and "the Lion of the tribe of Judah:" and as Joshua in Hebrew is the same name with Jesus in Greek, signifying "Jehovah's salvation;" so this elect leader of God's chosen people is a remarkable type — perhaps the most remarkable of all the Old-Testament types — of the Captain of our salvation, who, victorious over all enemies, leads his believing people over the Jordan of death, and puts them in possession of the heavenly Canaan.

An age or reign of brilliant and heroic action is usually, and, as human nature is, naturally and almost necessarily, followed by a period of rest, repose, reaction, perchance relapse and apostasy, very likely of temporary defeat and adversity. The history of conquests, of revolutions, of wars, even holy wars, in the cause of liberty and humanity, nay, the history of reformations and revivals of religion, all history

[11] Heroes of Hebrew History, by Samuel Wilberforce, D.D.

confirms and establishes as a matter of fact, what we might have presumed and almost assumed as an axiom in the philosophy of history. Thus it is that the age of Joshua is succeeded by the period of the Judges in the history of Israel.

Compared with the age which preceded and introduced it, the period of the Judges *is* an age of re-action, of relapse, of apostasy, and adversity; or rather it is a series of actions and re-actions, of relapses and recoveries, of apostasy punished by adversity, and reformation rewarded by prosperity, beginning soon after the death of Joshua, and stretching on through two or three centuries. It is often spoken of as if it were, in the main, a period of adversity; and yet, on the whole, the years of prosperity outnumber the years of adversity in the ratio of three or four to one. One of the ablest and most popular of our New-England preachers characterizes it as the age of barbarism, and makes it the text of his brilliant home-missionary sermon, entitled "Barbarism the First Danger;" and there are in it many dark scenes of barbaric disorder, of a most savage cruelty and revenge. Yet, on the other hand, read what Ewald — no partial critic — says of poetry, history, literature, and the arts, in this age. Look at the Washington-like modesty, self-control, and magnanimity of Gideon; and the Christ-like beauty of character of the young Samuel, favorite subject for the poet and the painter now; and read the song of Deborah, the apologue or fable of Jotham, and that most charming of all pastorals, the book of Ruth, which belongs to the age of the judges, and which were alone enough to redeem it.

I have called this period the youth of Israel; and many are the irregularities, many the follies and vices, of the young man, and many the chastisements which he receives at the hand of his heavenly Father. Many a sack of wild oats does he sow, and many a harvest does he reap of just what he sows, during those long years in which there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes. But, on the other hand, what heroic deeds, what manly courage, what womanly devotion and self-sacrifice, what knightly courtesy and generosity, what almost superhuman strength and prowess, were born of this freedom, and of that faith in God, in which the Epistle to the Hebrews so justly finds the inspiration of these ancient worthies, and the one secret of their strength! The age of the Judges was what we have styled it, — the heroic age in Israel, — just because, and just so far as, it was the age of FAITH.

The judges were not judges in the ordinary sense of the word. The administration of justice was only a casual and incidental function. The essential characteristic of the office was, that they were the reformers, the deliverers, the vindicators, in the Greek sense the heroes, in the Roman sense the dictators, in the mediæval sense the champions, perhaps we might add in the English and American sense the frontier and border-war leaders, of the people; and they have the virtues and the vices which have characterized these classes of men in every subsequent age. But whatever may have been their other excellences, and however great their imperfections may have been, they all had the virtue of

faith. They were all strong in the persuasion that they were raised up by God to vindicate his truth, to avenge his cause, to deliver his people: and however much we may shudder at Jephthah's vow, or be shocked at Jael's killing of Sisera; however much we may be disgusted by Samson's weaknesses, and amused by the gigantic drolleries that run through his prodigious achievements, — in the first place, we should remember that just such weaknesses are found in the heroes and demigods of ancient Greece, in the knights and reformers of modern Europe, in the chieftains and pioneers of early English and American history. Hercules had all the weaknesses of Samson, without half his wit. Hercules was a glutton, a wine-bibber, and an adulterer: Samson was free from all these vices. And yet Hercules, forsooth, was a god; while Samson was only a man, and a poor specimen at that. This shows how much higher the Hebrew *standard* is than the Greek. In the second place, such passages in sacred history should teach us a lesson of charity in our judgments, and reasonableness in our expectations. We should not expect perfection, even in our leaders of revolution and reform, when God uses such imperfect instruments to accomplish the grandest results. In the third place, the chief lesson which we learn from the history of the judges as individuals is, that faith, — in other words, loyalty to truth, duty, and God, — even though imperfectly understood, is the beginning of wisdom, is the essence of virtue, is the inspiration of heroism, is the secret of courage and strength; and the great lesson which we learn from the history of the chosen

people in the book of Judges, as indeed from all the history of the Old Testament, is, that disobedience to the divine commands is the one cause of individual suffering and national calamity, while obedience to the law of God is the one condition of prosperity and happiness. The key to the whole history is found in a few verses at the opening of the book: "The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel. . . . But there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim. . . . They forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them; . . . and they were greatly distressed. And, when they cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them." A very peculiar history we are apt to think it. And so it is, in form and manner; but, in substance and spirit, it has been the history of all nations in all ages. The history of Israel is a type of the history of the Church, even unto the end of the world; and of every believing soul, from his new birth till he enters the heavenly Canaan. This is a fact with which Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and a thousand other allegories, and the songs of the Christian Church, have made us perfectly familiar. But more than this is true. The history of Israel is substantially the his-

tory, in miniature, of every *nation* and of every *human being*. The great lesson of that history is, "Know the true God; worship him in spirit and in truth; fear him, and keep his commandments: in short, believe and obey, and you shall live; disbelieve and disobey, and you shall die." And this, I repeat, is substantially the lesson of all history. We read the same lesson to-day, very different, indeed, in form and manner, but just the same lesson in principle and spirit, in the lost battles, the distracted counsels, and the beleaguered capital, in the agony and tears and blood, of disbelieving, misbelieving, and ungodly France.

The history of Israel, both as it was lived and as it was written, was, indeed, a peculiar history. They were a very peculiar people. They are peculiar now. That is a plain matter of fact which no one can deny; for we see it with our own eyes. And they must always have been peculiar. There is no other philosophy of their history. Such a singular consequent as we see in the Jews of our own day must have had singular antecedents from the earliest times. Before they entered the promised land, Balaam, the son of Beor, prophesied of them, "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations;" and this prophecy has been fulfilled in all their subsequent history. This peculiar people had a special mission. They were raised up to teach Monotheism, — the knowledge, worship, love, and obedience of the only living and true God, — not to philosophers (for there have been philosophers in all ages who have discovered that "the God of Nature is one, while the gods of the people are many"), but to teach this doctrine, which philosophers have neither

propagated nor practised, as a practical thing to those very despised and neglected people in all ages, to the masses throughout Christendom in this our nineteenth century. I say, they *were raised up* for this purpose; for they have *accomplished* it: and, when a nation accomplishes a great work, I take it for granted that they were raised up for this purpose, and this was their mission. If it was the mission of Greece to teach the world art, and of Rome to teach law, *a fortiori* it was the mission of Israel to teach mankind religion. Remember, it was a Jew — the son, as was supposed, of a Jewish carpenter in Nazareth — who uttered those words which have no parallel in all the teachings of philosophers in their sublime and truthful significance: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." And he spoke those words to a woman, a woman of the common people, a woman of Samaria, as he sat weary on Jacob's well.[12] That is a perfect image of Christianity. That *is* Christianity living in the person of its Founder. And Christianity is from Judæa; "salvation is of the Jews."

Now, so peculiar a people, raised up for so peculiar a purpose, must have had a peculiar training. A special education was indispensable for those whose special mission it was to teach the world these sublime truths. And they manifestly did have special training. They were taught to see God, the one living and true God who made the heavens and the earth, everywhere, — in nature, in man, in history, in

[12] And, in relation to our general subject, it is worthy of notice that this took place in the same Valley of Shechem which was the scene of Israel's recognition of the law, and renewal of covenant, at the command of Joshua.

government, and in religion. The hand of God was in all these; and they were all sacred, all divine. Genius was his gift. Talents were distributed by him. Poetry was his inspiration, art his wisdom, handicraft his skill. Heroism, personal prowess, power to command, were all conferred by him. He taught men's hands to war, and their fingers to fight. Under his teaching, as well as by his appointment, kings reigned, and princes administered justice. There was not such a chasm between the natural and the supernatural, in their view, as there is in ours. The supernatural was more wonderful than the natural, but not a whit more divine. Miracles were only "signs and wonders." They never seem to have thought of any suspension of or interference with the laws of Nature. And in the miracles recorded in our history, as we have seen, it is hard to tell where the natural ends, and the supernatural begins. The moment we come into sympathy with such a people, standing in such relations to God and mankind, in training for such a mission, we cannot help feeling, that to them, in their circumstances, the supernatural becomes natural: it is just what they expected; and not only they, but we come to look upon it, under the circumstances, as a matter of course. And the natural, in turn, becomes supernatural: it is lifted above Nature, and appears as a part of God's moral plan, and a form of his agency.

And, after all, is not this the true view of Nature and the supernatural? It is the Homeric view; it is the Socratic doctrine; it is the doctrine of Plutarch and Newton. Newton declared that the laws of Nature are only the established ways of God's working.

Plutarch explained omens, lots, and prodigies on the ground of a mysterious sympathy between Nature and man, of which God was the author. God is in Nature; God is also in history. Why, then, should there not be a divine sympathy and harmony between them? God in every thing, according to its nature and object, *giving* every thing its nature, and *making* every thing accomplish its end, — this is the element of truth, mixed up with so much error, both in Polytheism and in Pantheism. This is not only the Christian's creed: it is the child's instinct and woman's intuition. It is the poet's vision and the insight of creative genius. It is the teaching not only of inspired prophets, but of those natural seers who seem to have been born to see things as they are, and of whom a writer in "The Dial" said many years ago, "These men never mistake: you might as well say there was untruth in the song of the wind or the light of the sun."

The earliest nations, and the earliest ages of all nations, have always believed in miracles. It seems like an instinct, not to say an intuition. Now, must there not be something, sometime and somewhere, to meet this instinctive want of mankind? Has He who meets every instinct of the lower animals provided nothing to answer this demand of the human soul? and, if it is met anywhere, would it not be likely to be met where it existed in its purest and strongest form? — among that chosen people who were raised up for the special purpose of communicating the knowledge and obedience of the one true God to the nations of the earth. No wise father would train a son for the Church as he would for farming or merchandise.

I take for granted that the *nations* have a wise heavenly Father; and if he has selected one of these to be "a nation of priests," and to communicate the knowledge of himself to the others (as unquestionable facts prove that he has), is it unreasonable to believe that he would give them a special education, and that by miracles and special revelations? No wise father will treat a son in manhood just as he did in childhood or infancy. Is it, then, unreasonable to believe that the heavenly Father may have taught the Israelites in their childhood, and through them the world in its infancy, by means of miracles and special revelations which need not be repeated in these latter days?

Perhaps, however, what *we* most need in these days is to be converted, and enter into the kingdom of heaven again in the same spirit in which Lord Bacon says we must enter both that kingdom and "the kingdom of men founded in science," "as little children." Certainly it would not harm any of us to carry a young heart in vital union with an old head; to unite the humility and docility of childhood with the wisdom of age; in other words, to mix a little more faith with our science and philosophy.

IV.

THE HEBREW THEOCRACY.

BY REV. LEONARD BACON, D.D.

MORE than three thousand years ago, the Hebrew tribes went forth from Egypt to repossess the territory which their ancestors had occupied in what is now called Palestine. Though they had dwelt on the banks of the Nile through we know not how many generations, they had not lost their patriarchal organization by tribes and clans; and they still retained much of their ancient character and habits as a pastoral people. They had lived in close contact with the Egyptians, and had been, to some extent, interfused among them; but they were not of them, and had been kept distinct by a mutual antipathy between the races. Inhabiting chiefly a fertile district of that fertile country, and favored, for a while, by the government, they had become numerous enough and powerful enough to be regarded with political jealousy; and, in the later years of their residence there, they had been treated as vanquished enemies, reduced to the condition of helots, and compelled to labor on the public works. Trodden down by oppression, they still cherished the traditions of their race; among which was their trust

in a divine promise given to Abraham, and renewed to Isaac and to Jacob. They had not wholly forgotten their great ancestors; nor had they relinquished the expectation of becoming a great people, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

We need not, just now, inquire carefully concerning the events which preceded or accompanied the going-forth of that people from Egypt. I need not demand that you shall decide, at present, how much or how little there is of myth and poetry in what the old Hebrew Scriptures tell us about the Exodus. You may assume, if you will, so far as the subject now before us is concerned, that the Author of Nature cannot break through the barriers of Nature to reveal the supernatural, and that every story which represents him as doing so must be regarded as either poetry or fable; for I am not intending to discuss the philosophical question of miracles. But, on the other hand, you must allow me to assume as historically true that portion of the ancient narrative which no scientific scepticism can pronounce incredible, or even improbable.

These, then, are facts which I find in the old Hebrew books, and which are assumed in the proposed inquiry. While the tribes of Israel were under oppression in Egypt, there arose among them one of those men whose personal influence affects all subsequent history. Moses, a man familiar with the learning and wisdom of Egypt, and brought up in the royal household, but deliberately preferring to identify himself with the race to which he belonged by birth, rather than with that which had adopted him, became to the Hebrews their leader and their law-

giver. Led by him, they were in some way delivered from the oppressive power of Egypt, and brought out into the neighboring regions of Arabia. There, reverting to the old habits of their race, they became wanderers in that mountainous wilderness, — a nation of Bedouins. There, during at least the lifetime of one generation, they are under the discipline of desert-life, dwelling in tents, moving from one wady or oasis to another, encamping for a while where they can find water and temporary sustenance for their scanty flocks and for themselves, and then passing on to make another encampment. Trained in the wild freedom of the desert, they are also trained in habits of subordination. The necessity of keeping together in a compact body, and of carrying arms for protection against Arab enemies, involves the necessity not only of something like military organization and discipline, but also of laws and magistrates to measure out justice between one man and another, and to punish offenders against the common-weal. Meanwhile they are cherishing the tradition of a good old time, when their ancestors dwelt in a land of springs and streams, of hillsides adorned with vine-yards and olive-yards, of plains watered by showers, and waving with harvests; and, blended with that cherished memory, there is ever in their hearts the hope of a good time coming, when they shall repossess the land of promise. At last, they emerge from the desert; they pass over the Jordan; they settle themselves in Palestine, and become an agricultural people. But they bring with them from the desert, not only the patriarchal traditions which their fathers carried into Egypt,

but also a body of laws and institutions which distinguish them from all other nations. In their religion they are distinguished by a striking peculiarity, jealously guarded. They acknowledge one only God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Him they worship only in his invisible majesty; nor do they even tolerate any visible representation of him. In their government they acknowledge no king but God, and no law that does not rest on his authority. Him they regard as the one great force in nature and in all the progress of events. Especially do they recognize him in their own history. He called their great ancestor from beyond the Euphrates. He has brought them out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage. The land which they inhabit is his gift, and they hold it only under him. He is their God, and there is no other; for the gods of Egypt and the gods of all the nations, whether they worship sculptured stones or the powers of nature and the lights of heaven, are vanity and a lie.

Long afterwards, an historian of that people, writing in the first century of the Christian era to vindicate his nation against the scoffs and reproaches of a Greek, coined the word "theocracy" to designate the peculiarity of their government as instituted by Moses. "Our lawgiver," said he, "appointed our government to be what, with some violence done to language, may be called a theocracy."[1] That word, invented by Josephus, has been singularly misunderstood, and the great fact which it represents has been singularly misrepresented. Let us recall its original

[1] Josephus, Answer to Apion, ii. 17.

meaning, and we may see whether it was fitly applied as the peculiar designation of the Hebrew commonwealth.

Separating the word from a cloud of vague associations, and looking only at its strict and legitimate meaning, we find it related to other words in common use, — democracy, aristocracy, autocracy. In a democracy, the will of the δῆμος, or people, is the ultimate authority: the laws and the government are recognized as proceeding from that source: magistrates and officers are the servants of the people. In an aristocracy, the will of a certain superior class — the ἄριστοι, or nobles — is supreme: the laws are of their making, and magistrates are their servants. In an autocracy, the will of an absolute monarch makes and unmakes laws; and all the functionaries of government are servants of the king. What, then, is a theocracy? It is that state or commonwealth in which the law is God's will, and the government is administered by magistrates who are his servants.

Such was, in fact, the idea of the Hebrew theocracy. The great truth, that there is One only, the living and true God; the truth which Abraham brought with him from the east; that ancient truth, of which some tradition had been maintained in various tribes of the great Semitic race, but which the human mind, in its tendency to superstition, personifying and worshipping the powers of Nature, and deifying the memory of dead heroes, is ever prone to bury under mythological fancies, — was brought into a just conspicuousness among the Hebrews at the very time when it was fading out of the religion of all other nations. By the mission of Moses, rousing them to

demand, and leading them forth to obtain, their liberty, that truth was made to them the bond of their national unity and the vital force of their national existence. Under oppression, they learned to abhor the polytheism of their oppressors. In the colossal temples of Egypt, bulls were worshipped. At the rude altars of Hebrew worship, bulls — the objects of Egyptian adoration — were slaughtered in sacrifice to the one invisible God. The first demand in behalf of Israel was, that the entire nation might go out freely into the rocky wilderness, there to offer sacrifices which the Egyptians would abhor, and which could not be offered in their presence without provoking them to fury.[2] In the conflict which ensued, every demand which Moses made was in the name of Israel's God; and the effect of every refusal, and of all the waiting and suffering, was, on the part of Israel, a deeper abhorrence of such gods as Egypt worshipped, and (what may often be seen in times of national excitement) a more tenacious adherence to the inspiring idea, which, more than race or language, made Israel a distinct nation, and incapable of fusion in the Egyptian civilization. Whatever might be the schemes of princes and statesmen in the court of Pharaoh, whatever the maunderings and juggleries of priests in the temples, whatever the theories and learned explanations set forth by wise men in the schools, the Hebrews, according to their old way of thinking, and inspired by the great crisis, saw God in all the progress of that conflict. He scourged the land with plagues. He hardened Pharaoh's heart. They were looking on, not as students in the physical

[2] Exod. v. 1; viii. 26.

sciences or in metaphysics, but with those instincts and intuitions that recognize God, and reach into the infinite. Their deliverer was not Moses, but God; and Moses was his servant. God was with them on their sultry march. He led them through the sea. The "strong east wind" opening a path for them was his power. He overwhelmed the host of Pharaoh. To them, the manna which they gathered every morning was his gift, — "bread from heaven," — and the quails that rested around their camp were his provision for their need. He opened fountains for them in the desert. The genius of their artists and the skill of their artisans were his inspiration. So near were they to God; so full of God was the common thought and speech of the nation; so little of intermediate causation was there in their thought, between what they saw and experienced and the one creative and ruling power of the universe; so vivid was their sense of his intervention for their deliverance from the oppressor, — that it was natural for them to acknowledge God as the King of Israel, and to regard themselves as under his protection.

It was under such an inspiration that their great leader brought them into the mountain-fastnesses of Horeb, — a region with which he was familiarly acquainted, and where, in the presence of those awful heights piercing the blue ether, he had first become conscious of a divine call to a sublimer work than man had ever before attempted. Thither he led the emancipated tribes; and there he was to complete the great work of his life by giving them a revelation from God in the form of law. By the legislation of which he was not the author, but only the commissioned

apostle, that new nation, in its political unity and its political independence, was to be brought into a new relation to its divine Deliverer. God's word to them was, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." To that message the nation, through its constituted representatives, made answer, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."[3] Then came the giving of the law, forever associated with the veiled and thundering summit of Sinai, — those ten commandments, summing up in their rugged sententiousness all human duty, and compelling every human conscience to recognize them in their spirit and essence as the universal and immutable law of God. All else in the Mosaic legislation, whether civil or ritual, is auxiliary to the fundamental and central law of those ten commandments. Those "ten words" (the Decalogue) were the great "testimony" which God gave to his own Israel; the tablets of granite from Sinai, on which they were graven for perpetual remembrance, were the "tables of testimony;" the ark or coffer in which the records, not of perishable papyrus from Egypt, but of enduring rock, were laid up as the most precious and venerable of national muniments, was "the ark of the testimony." It was also "the ark of the covenant;" for the tables of the law were the "tables of the covenant," and "the testimony" of the ten awful words was itself

[3] Exod. xix. 4–8.

"the covenant."[4] The violation of those commandments was the breaking of God's covenant; and it was by keeping that covenant that Israel was to be a kingdom of priests unto God, and a holy nation. The one design running through every precept and every institution of the Mosaic system is, that the chosen people, the kingdom of priests unto God, may be guarded against corrupting and debasing influences; may feel on every side and in every movement the pressure of God's authority; and may be trained by habits of personal purity, and by all the significant ritual of the national worship, into obedience to the immutable and universal duties of which the ten commandments are the revelation.

I conceive, then, that the true idea of the Hebrew theocracy is given in the fact that the law which that people receive is God's law; and that, acknowledging God's sovereignty over them, they acknowledge no sovereignty but his. In Egypt, they had known a king who was the fountain of all authority in government, and whose will was enforced as law; and that king was not their God. But when they had passed the Red Sea, and stood free on the Arabian shore, they had another king. Egypt had king after king, — a Pharaoh yesterday, another Pharaoh to-morrow, — a man whose breath was in his nostrils; but Israel's King was Jehovah, — King eternal, immortal, invisible. The song of victory over vanquished Egypt is full of the thought that Israel's God is Israel's King: —

[4] Exod. xxv. 15, 21; xxxi. 18; xxxiv. 28; Lev. xxxiv. 14, 15; Deut. iv. 13; ix. 9, 11, 15.

"Jehovah is a man of war: Jehovah is his name.
Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea.
Thy right hand, O Jehovah! is become glorious in power.
Thy right hand, O Jehovah! hath dashed in pieces the enemy.
Jehovah shall be King for ever and ever." [5]

Israel, free Israel, has no king but the Almighty, no sovereign lawgiver but the All-Holy: Jehovah is his name.

Let us exclude from our conception of that Hebrew theocracy the idea of hierarchy, or government by a priestly order. There were priests in Israel, and a high priest; but, as we trace their history through the canonical books of the Old Testament, we find no intimation of any political power pertaining directly or indirectly to the priestly office. It can hardly be said that they were the religious teachers of the people, or the official and authoritative expounders of the law, save in matters of ceremony and ritual. As employed continually in the offering of sacrifices, and in other typical services of the national religion, they were the official guardians of the tabernacle, and of the ark of the covenant, with its treasures; and in that character they also held in their custody an authentic and standard copy of the law, which they were to read once in seven years, at the feast of tabernacles, before all the people. They were simply the servants of the nation, and its representatives, in the ritual of national worship. There was, indeed, through the last age of Jewish independence, a priestly government in Judæa: the high priests of the Asmonean line were virtually kings as well as priests. But we do not search the books of Macca-

[5] Exod. xv. 3, 4, 6, 18.

bees to learn what the theocracy over Israel was, as established by the ministry of Moses.

Let us also observe that the theocracy was not, as may be heedlessly supposed, some peculiarity in the *form* of the government. In the form of their government, the tribes of Israel, during the period of their wanderings, were like the other tribes that then roamed, and that now roam, over the same territory. Among the many incidental evidences that show the antiquity of the Pentateuch, and its authenticity as a description of the Hebrew commonwealth in the time of its migration from Egypt to the land of promise, one of the most striking is the portraiture which those books give so artlessly — or, rather, which they unintentionally enable the reader to make for himself — of its political organization. We see, that, even in Egypt, the Israelites, notwithstanding the oppression that crushes them, have their elders, or *sheiks*, to whom Moses brings his message ; who assemble at his call ; and who are, in some sort, the recognized representatives of the people. Thus it is that they go forth into Arabia, not as a horde, or rabble, of fugitives, but as an immense caravan of distinct yet kindred tribes ; each tribe divided into clans and families, with their subordinate chiefs. Such was the form of government which Moses found already existing ; and, in the changes which he introduced, the patriarchal form of government remained unchanged. Under the theocracy, the *form* of government was essentially the same as before. That theocracy, therefore, was something in the spirit and essence of the Hebrew commonwealth, rather than in the form of government.

Another misleading idea must be eliminated from our conception of the subject. While we remember that God, by his name Jehovah, was King in Israel, the only Sovereign over the people redeemed by him from their bondage; that the law was his law, and the magistrates were his servants, — let us also remember that the government of God over that people was *not* a government by miraculous intervention constantly repeated. Whatever were the miracles by which the relation of that people to God as their King was introduced and inaugurated (miracles of which I may say something before closing this discussion), and whatever of miraculous inspiration there was from time to time in the great leaders and prophets of Israel afterwards, the fact of God's kingly authority in Israel was one thing, and the miracles were quite another thing. The wisdom and fidelity of magistrates, the patriotic loyalty of the people, the thrift of virtuous and industrious households, the sagacity of statesmen, the valor of warriors, the influences of soil and climate on national character, together with those concurrences and combinations (beyond human control, and often beyond human foresight) which enter into all history, and which are referred by religious minds to the Divine Providence, and by unthinking minds to fate or fortune, — all such things were as necessary and as potent in the history of Israel as in that of any other nation, and were the means and methods by which God governed and protected his own chosen people.

Summing up these views, we may describe the theocratic element in the Hebrew commonwealth negatively and affirmatively. *Negatively*, it was not

(1) a hierarchical or priestly authority in civil and political affairs; nor (2) any special constitution in respect to the designation or names of magistrates, or the distribution of their powers and duties; nor yet (3) a government by God's direct and miraculous intervention constantly repeated, — a divine government, without human agency and the ordinary instrumentality of second causes. *Affirmatively*, it was the fact that Israel alone among the nations worshipped the true and only God; acknowledged him as the Author of the State, and the one supreme Lawgiver; trusted in his protection; was guided by leaders whom he raised up; was taught by prophets who were his messengers; and was the depositary of mysterious and marvellous promises from God for "all the families of the earth." In the unity of their common relation to God as his people, a loose confederacy of nomadic tribes becomes a nation, having the knowledge and worship of the revealed though invisible God as their chief distinction among the nations, and their covenant of obedience to God's law as their national constitution. Their public tent, or tabernacle, "the tabernacle of the congregation" (afterwards superseded by the temple), was not only "the holy place," the national sanctuary where sacrifices were offered and all the ceremonies of the national religion were performed: it was also their national capitol; the senate-house; the place of all national assemblies, "whither the tribes went up, — the tribes of the Lord." Their national and political liberty was, that they were the freed people of Jehovah, and that he was their King: their personal liberty was, that every Israelite was a consecrated

personage, a citizen in a kingdom of priests, — a citizen, therefore, whose rights, as defined by the law of God, were to be respected and guarded by all who administered the government in God's name. The State was a divine institution: its fundamental laws were the immutable and universal moralities of the Decalogue; and the more particular regulations, however minute, and however local or temporary in their nature; the details of legislation by which those fundamental laws were to be applied and enforced, or by which the wild freedom of Bedouin life was to be restrained, and habits of half-savage violence or license which had come down from earlier ages was to be safely reformed; yes, even the ceremonial rules and prohibitions by which the nation was to be isolated from the contamination of unrestricted intercourse with the heathen, — were accepted and observed as sanctioned by divine authority.

If, now, we ask what have been the effects of that theocracy, and what has come of it in relation to the progress of the human race, we must needs observe, first, what the effect was on that particular nation. To those who are intelligently familiar with so much as is known concerning the history of that nation, a few words on this topic will be sufficient. What were the Israelites as they came out of Egypt? What were they when they crossed the Jordan? What were they when David fixed his throne in Jerusalem, and, the monarchical form of government having succeeded to the simple republic, kings instead of judges were to administer the theocracy? What were they when at last they came within the expanding circle of the Greek, and then of the Ro-

man civilization? Their own sacred books record more of their barbarisms and their vices, more of their lapses into idolatry, and of the noxious superstitions with which, notwithstanding the perpetual quarantine that guarded them, they were from time to time infected, more of the calamities brought upon them by their sins, than of their loyalty to God, their fidelity to their trust, and their felicity and progress. Yet some things in the record open to us incidentally, here and there, a striking view of what their law and their worship of Jehovah were doing for them. They came out of Egypt not entirely uncultured, but with many traits of barbarism, and with many superstitions acquired in that land, or received by tradition from foregoing ages. But the story of Ruth, a few generations after the Exodus; the story of Hannah, and of Samuel's birth and childhood; the glimpses which we get of Jesse at Bethlehem, and of his family-life, — how suggestive are they of the changes which the theocratic system had wrought and was working! How charming are those pictures of home-life and village-life, of affection and devotion, of contented industry and quiet thrift! What a contrast is there, morally and socially, — while the identity in other respects is equally striking, — between what we see of Israel delivered from oppression, and wandering in the Arabian wilderness, and these incidental glimpses of the same people after a few generations under the moulding and inspiring influence of what we have called the theocracy! Those ages, we must remember, were ages of conflict, and of frequent calamity, — ages full of barbarizing influences most adverse to moral and

social advancement: yet such were the privileges of Israelites under their national covenant with God; such liberty had they, and with liberty a carefully-guarded equality; such lessons of equity, of pity, and of human charity, were continually impressed upon them; so effectually were they cut off from demoralizing intercourse with other nations; and such was the power of their religious ideas and traditions, — that their land, theirs at last in undisputed possession, had become, not indeed a heaven on earth, nor a Utopia such as poets and sages have dreamed of, but a land of cultivated homesteads and vine-clad homes, of gardens and fields and terraced hills, and, in the estimate of its happy population, "the glory of all lands."

We have to-day, not only in great libraries and repositories of rare and curious learning, but in all our dwellings, a collection of ancient writings in a single volume, which is perfectly unique among the remains of the earliest literature, and is at once a record and a most remarkable product of the Hebrew theocracy. Those Scriptures show us, that, under the theocracy, religion was not merely a national affair, in which the individual was concerned only as a loyal citizen, but was also, and much more eminently, the consciousness of a direct relation between the individual soul and God. They show us how the theocratic idea of God, who had revealed himself in the ten commandments, and had said to the sons of Israel, "I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself," — the idea of Jehovah the King and Redeemer of his chosen people, — took hold of individual souls. In the religious consciousness of the

devout Israelite, the tutelar and covenant God was not the God of the nation only, and related to him simply as a member of the favored commonwealth, but was near to him in immediate and personal relations, — *his* King and his Deliverer. Every believing Israelite who could say, as one of the worshipping nation, "Oh! come, let *us* worship and bow down, let *us* kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is *our* God, and we are the people of his pasture;"[6] or, "Sing aloud unto God *our* strength; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob,"[7] — could also say, in the stillness of his most solitary meditation, "Be merciful unto *me*, O God! be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make *my* refuge;"[8] or, "Truly *my* soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation; he only is *my* rock and my salvation."[9] The book of Psalms — that old prayer-book and hymn-book of the theocratic nation; that marvellous book, as fresh and vital to-day in our own English tongue, or in the language of Hawaii, as when its latest strain was chanted in Hebrew, on some Judæan hillside, more than two thousand years ago — is pre-eminently a book of individual experience and devotion, and is the conclusive proof that the religion of the theocracy was a spiritual religion, the intelligent intercourse of individual souls with God. In the prophets, too, we see the God of the theocracy coming into immediate relations of intimacy and affection with individual souls. He who "inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," and who "dwelleth in the high and holy place," dwells "with him also that is of a contrite and hum-

[6] Ps. xcv. 6, 7. [7] Ps. lxxxi. 1. [8] Ps. lvii. 1. [9] Ps. lxii. 1, 2.

ble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."[10] The ritualism of that system was national: the stoled and mitred priesthood, the bloody altar, the fragrant incense, all the pompous ceremonial of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple, were for Israel as a nation: and when the temple fell; when holy Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles; when the Hebrew or Jewish State, prolonged through so many ages and under so many forms of political organization, was dissolved by dispersion into all the world, — these things passed away. But the religion of the theocracy, easily distinguished from the national ritualism as a religion for individual souls, had a stronger vitality: it was spiritual, and therefore immortal.

Already that religion had brought into existence — we know not how long ago — an institution for religious instruction and impression, and a method of social worship, in which there was no place for the grandly imposing ritual of the national worship. In the synagogue, a simply intelligent and spiritual religion — a religion of faith in God, and of obedience to his commandments — had instituted for itself a worship which made no appeal to the senses. The synagogue was a convenience for every neighborhood, — a sabbath meeting of neighbors in their meeting-house; and its services — prayer and praise, the reading of the holy books, and expository teaching and exhortation, all bare of pomp and ornament — were impressive only in their severe simplicity. Thus the people — not a favored class, but all — were in-

[10] Isa. lvii. 15.

structed in the law of God and in his promises, and were taught to worship him.

Such, then, was the theocracy — the kingdom of God — in its relation to the culture and training of that secluded people. When the Greek conquerors, Alexander, and his captains and successors, established their dominions in Egypt and Syria, they found in the narrow territory of Palestine a people unique among the nations, — a people religiously avoiding intercourse with foreigners, passionately patriotic in their adherence to their distinctive institutions, fierce in the assertion of their independence, restive and turbulent under oppression, and honoring the very dust of their own land as holy, but already beginning to overflow into other lands; a veritably human people, with all the passions of humanity, and not exempt from the vices and the crimes which are always and everywhere incident to human society, but with rules of living, and a standard of social morality, which had made them eminently thrifty and happy. Sagacious kings vied with each other in their endeavors to attract Jewish communities into the cities which they were founding, and which were to be, on that side of the Mediterranean Sea, the centres of a European culture, and of fusion between the conquering race and the conquered. Suddenly such communities were formed, sometimes with special immunities and privileges, at Alexandria, at Antioch, at every centre of commercial activity and of the intercourse of nations. In every such city there was the synagogue, where the "sojourners," as they called themselves, of that singular race, were wont to hold hebdomadal assemblies for worship; and that strange

worship attracted first the curious, then the thoughtful and serious, of other races. There thoughtful men, — and women too, — weary of senseless superstitions, disgusted with mythologies of gods unholy and impure, and groping as in the dark after some theory of the universe that might relieve the half-conscious hunger of their souls, found worship without an altar or an idol, — the worship of a God unseen, but not unknown. They heard in the cosmopolitan Greek the story of the creation by an omnipotent word, of which all Nature is only the articulate utterance; they heard that grand confession, "Hear, O Israel! the Lord thy God is one Lord;" they heard the story of Israel's redemption and of Israel's sins and chastisements; they caught the idea of God's kingdom in the world, — the law God's law, government the administration of his justice; and, from exultant prophecy and chanted psalm, they learned to expect a new and glorious coming of that kingdom, with blessings for "all the families of the earth."

In the fulness of time, a rumor spreads abroad from Palestine that "the kingdom of God is at hand." Pilgrims, returning from Jerusalem, bring strange, and doubtless confused and conflicting reports. The rumor grows more distinct; the agitation deepens. Missionaries from Jerusalem stand up in the synagogues, and tell a marvellous story. Jesus of Nazareth — rejected by the Jewish authorities, and crucified by the Roman power, but risen from death to immortality, invested with all authority on earth and in heaven, and ever present with his followers — is the anointed Deliverer, for whom kings and prophets

waited, and in whom "all the families of the earth are blessed." Christianity — the new theocracy, in which the old promises are fulfilled, and before which, in the dawn of its glory, the old shadows fade into light, and are lost — finds its foothold in the synagogues. There it finds a people prepared for its coming, — the enlightened and humbly religious Hebrew waiting for the consolation of Israel; the devout Gentile listening to the prophets, and worshipping at the gate. If, in the conflict which ensues, the new theocracy is expelled from the synagogue in one city and another, as it had been from the temple at Jerusalem, it forms synagogues of its own. It adds to the scriptures of the old covenant its gospels and the writings of its own apostles. It fulfils the ancient promise, and teaches men of every land and lineage to say, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord! art our Father, our Redeemer." It goes forth to spread through all nations the knowledge and worship and the kingdom of a redeeming God.

Thus the new "kingdom of God," instead of being a kingdom over one nation only, is to include all nations. Under the reign of Him who is "King of kings, and Lord of lords," every government is to become a true theocracy, the government of God, founded on his authority, and administering his justice.

Shallow sciolists in politics and history sometimes sneer at what they call the Puritan theocracy, — the attempt of our New-England fathers to assert in their civil institutions, and to administer by their

magistrates, the law of God. This is not the time to enter into any historical vindication of those founders of our commonwealths; nor is any such vindication needed in this place. We are all ready to acknowledge that they fell into some serious errors; but let us not forget that their principle of framing their laws according to the mind of God, and of administering at all their tribunals God's justice, is the only principle of true liberty. In the old Pagan republics, — as in the ideal and impossible republics of modern Socialism, — the individual citizen existed only for the state; and, though he might have rights against foreigners and against his fellow-citizen which the state must protect, against the state itself he had no rights. Now, if society, or the state, is merely a human contrivance, resting on no divine foundation; if rights are created by the state, and are not at all the cause or reason of its existence, — I have in reality no rights; and it is of no great consequence to me — the difference is not essential — whether I hold my liberty, my property, my wife and children, at the caprice of a godless monarch, or at the caprice of a godless democracy. But if the state is itself a divine creation, and is so regarded and acknowledged; if it can neither create nor extinguish any human right; if it exists only as God's institution for the protection of rights which are his gift to his human children; if its legislation is to be simply the enactment of what is intrinsically just, and therefore according to God's mind; if the application and execution of its laws is to be simply the administration of God's justice by the constituted ministers of his will, — then the state is a theocracy. But this con-

ception of a state is the only conception of it which Christianity tolerates.[11]

Let it not be said that such a state is a spiritual despotism. The state will be a spiritual despotism if you give to an infallible pontiff, or to a hierarchy, or to the synods and ministry of an established church, the power of deciding for the state, and without appeal, what is the will of God. But if you reserve and guard that first right, conservative of all rights; that right without which all other rights are worthless; that which Protestants call the right of private judgment; the right of appealing from all human judgments to a higher law, and of suffering and dying, if need be, in the assertion of that appeal; if the people, enlightened by the word of God, are to be, after full inquiry and discussion, the ultimate judge on earth; if legislation is to pronounce simply the aggregate moral sense of a thoroughly Christian people, — spiritual despotism and every other despotism is impossible.

In view, then, of what the Hebrew theocracy really was, and of the when and where of its origin; in view of its effects on the nation to which it was given, and of its grand result and outcome in universal history and in relation to the destinies of the human race, — how shall we account for it? Did it come by chance, in some unintelligent, and therefore unintelligible, evolution? or is it of God? It has been and is a power: is it of God?

If it be of God, why should it not be introduced into the world's history with due authentication of its

[11] Rom. xiii. 1-6.

origin? Shall we take it upon ourselves to say that it shall not come, or that it cannot come, attended with supernatural wonders? Is there in the universe nothing else than Nature? Is universal Nature intelligible? and is there, O muddled philosopher! no supreme and primal Intelligence from which it came? no supreme and primal Will on which all its correlated forces depend, and into which they must be, in the last analysis, resolved?

As I think of Moses, and of his part and place in the great story of humanity, how can I refuse to believe that God sent him? I see the infant prophet floating in his cradle on the Nile. He is saved: who saves him? I see him standing with unsandalled feet before that flame at Horeb: shall I inquire into the chemistry of the phenomenon before I acknowledge the validity of his commission? I see him standing before Pharaoh with a message from God: shall I refuse to believe till I understand all the psychology of his inspiration? I see him stretch forth his shepherd's staff in prophetic commination; and, when plague after plague scourges the land of Misraim, need I know or ask what second causes, and how many, were concerned in the infliction? I stand with the affrighted tribes by the fords of the Red Sea: shall I ask from what cave of storms the "strong east wind" blows "all that night," and lays bare a path for the redeemed to pass over? Or if I stand before the cloud-veiled Sinai, and hear its thunders, shall I refuse to believe that God is there? Shall I stand and gabble about vapors and electricity because the cloud and the lightnings are the hiding of his power?

No! let me acknowledge God, — God in Nature, all its arrangements his wisdom, all its forces his power; God in history, his love watching over humanity and saving it. The only explanation of universal History, as of universal Nature, is the Supernatural.

V.

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

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THE subject assigned to me in this course of lectures is the prophet Isaiah, — a subject, to me, of great difficulty; and which, with my limited time of preparation, I feel an incapacity to treat as its importance demands.

A prophet was a great personage among the ancient Jews. He was a sacred and honored seer, whose voice, for good or evil, was seldom disregarded. He was considered as the messenger and interpreter of Jehovah, inspired by him to declare his purposes, sent by him to foretell the future, to pronounce doom, to preach righteousness, and to kindle hope in the day of calamities. In dignity he lived, whether in the desert or in kings' palaces, in poverty or in wealth, to communicate the will of the moral Governor of the world, the universal Father; a God jealous of his honor; personal, omniscient, and omnipresent; interfering with human affairs; bringing good out of evil; ruling in justice, yet abounding in mercy; the personification of all divine attributes, of which love was the great and the crowning glory.

The vocation of so dignified a personage was dis-

tinct from that of the priest, who belonged to a caste whose duties were legal and perfunctory; a man set apart to minister to the altar, to uphold the ceremonials of outward religious worship.

The priest wore a peculiar dress; he lived apart from men; he was respected and honored, as belonging to a divine institution: but he did not declare the occult purposes of God; he had no grand authority in matters outside his sphere, no peculiar wisdom, no inspiration. Nor was he armed, like the prophet, with spiritual thunders: he did not rebuke the supreme ruler of the state, nor even consult with kings on political affairs. But the prophet was a statesman, as well as seer; always a preacher, and sometimes an inspired poet, by whom and through whom the Almighty spoke on most momentous subjects, even as the oracle of Dodona or Delphi was supposed to communicate the mind and will of the heathen deities.

There is no mention of this august personage before the time of Moses, although God revealed himself to patriarchs, and made covenants with them. Jacob may have foretold the future destiny of his descendants, and Joseph may have promised to his brethren the possession which God had sworn to Abraham. But with Moses, the greatest man, on the whole, of all antiquity, the first prophetical epoch of the Jewish Church commenced, as seen in his magnificent burst of song after the passage of the Red Sea. The book of Deuteronomy, lost from the time of Solomon to Jeremiah, is a continued story of God's future providences; so that its author uses almost the same language as Isaiah himself in his

thirty-second chapter. It was not, however, until the period of the Judges that the prophetic office became a fixed institution of the Jews. Samuel was the founder of the order, and established "the school of the prophets," of which he was the inspired and venerated head. David was called the "prophet-king," as well as the "royal psalmist" and "the sweet singer of Israel;" and hence he predicted the coming of a Messiah, the future glory of Zion, and the triumph of the Messianic reign. When Solomon died, the prophetic order assumed a new importance, especially when the theocratic state had lapsed into the idolatries of surrounding nations. Then a remarkable class of prophets arose, who endeavored to counteract the sins of kings and people, and awaken the nation to an acknowledgment of the only true God; and the deeper the degeneracy to which the people sunk, the more jealously and earnestly did these remarkable teachers bring to view the inevitable punishment in store for sin and unbelief, as well as the ultimate glories of the restoration. Then arose such men as Elijah and Elisha, denouncing sternly the vengeance of the Almighty on the follies of ruler and people, and the administration of idolatrous nations. They and others inspired a peculiar awe. Sometimes they were men of rank, allied by blood to princes; and at other times they were obscure, and without any of the outward circumstances which command the reverence of the people. And yet ever were they feared and revered, even when persecuted and slain.

They clothed themselves with the garments of humiliation; were ascetic in diet and habits; and lived a

life of severe contemplation, such as was imitated by the original monks. They were the great preachers, the great poets, the great statesmen, of their times, and remind us of the combined moral and political power which was wielded in later times by Bernard, Anselm, and Savonarola, — austere, stern, majestic in voice and air; respecting no persons, however high their rank; and even looking upon themselves as the chosen ministers of the ever-living and ever-ruling God. From the time of Samuel to the eighth century before Christ, the prophets directed their preaching chiefly to their own times, and sought to impart vigor into the theocratic state, reeling from the sorceries of idolatry, and tottering from the convulsions of war. But when the prophets were, at last, compelled to despair of the State, from the outrageous wickedness which stared everybody in the face, and the dying-out of the idea of the personal God whom Abraham and Moses recognized, then they declared most awful calamities on the Jewish nation and on surrounding nations, until, scourged and humiliated, and nearly ruined, a remnant should be saved, and this remnant should form the nucleus of new moral forces, and see a restoration of divine favor; yea, the exaltation of the Seed of David, and the renewed glories of Jerusalem.

Of these prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, and Isaiah were the representatives, who flourished before the Babylonian captivity, even as Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel prophesied during the captivity, and Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi flourished after the return from Babylon. All these were men of com-

manding dignity and influence, the marked men of their age, confirming the authority of their predecessors; "the last of the series who had flourished in continuous succession for more than a thousand years." According to Augustine, they were the philosophers, the divines, the teachers, of the Hebrews, raised up to be illustrious witnesses of the presence and will of God. Though they lived chiefly in retirement, clothed in skins and in sackcloth, and fed on the wild fruits of the earth, yet they were learned, cultivated, and revered both for piety and virtue. They committed their precious and inspired predictions to writing, which are uniformly marked by great splendor of diction, intense energy of style, ardent poetical imagination, and transcendent loftiness of thought; so that no other human compositions have ever approached them in sublimity and grandeur, or even majestic sweetness: and the great masters of moral wisdom from their time to ours, whether poets or artists or philosophers or orators, have acknowledged their vast obligations to them, and in no small degree have derived from them their inspiration; like Dante, Michael Angelo, Pascal, and Bossuet.

But all these prophets yield in sublimity and varied excellence, especially poetical beauty, to Isaiah, who is more frequently quoted by Christ and his apostles than all the rest together; a most fruitful subject of commentary, from Jerome to Delitzsch; and whose glowing exultations and beautiful tenderness, as well as awful denunciations and grand descriptions, we never weary in contemplating, and never feel we have exhausted, — so rich, so varied, and so profound, is his book, from beginning to end.

Not as a prophet merely does he loom up, the grandest and the sternest, as well as the most inspiring and hopeful, of the whole series of Jewish seers; but as a poet he takes the highest rank. In most exalted language, he soars beyond the miseries of the captivity to the restoration of Israel and the glories of the Messiah's reign. "The wildest tribes of savages," says Stanley, "when converted, have chanted his magnificent strains as belonging to their own national songs." Great musical compositions are based on his anticipations of a life of peace; while the finest efforts of the great artists of the sixteenth century may be, in no slight degree, traced to the dignity with which he invested his subjects. In him Hebrew poetry culminated. No poetry was ever more sublime and original. It may not be artistic like the dramas of Æschylus or the epics of Homer; but it is more vivid, more lofty, and more intense, than either. As Carlyle says of the "Inferno," "it is like that of fire in a dark night." Isaiah may not have dwelt with dramatic effect on the career of individuals; he may not be opulent in descriptions of natural scenery, like Thomson; he may not paint mortal passion like Shakspeare; he may not be artificial, like Roman artists: but he seizes on immutable truth, on moral truth, and rises to the throne of eternal justice, where the Almighty reigns in love and truth. He dwells with awful power on retributive wrath; he scorches with the fiercest sarcasms the silly unbelievers of his day; and, in exalted flights, he paints the mercy which culminates over wrath, the certainty of restored blessings, and the transporting glories of the New Jerusalem. In Job we hear the mighty voice of God

speaking in the whirlwind, and see his wonders in the heavens and the clustered glories of his vast creation. In David we are kindled by those matchless songs, which rest in God as a supreme support; those glorious chants, which neither Ambrose nor Gregory has reached; glowing with warmth and faith, reverential in tone, catholic in breadth, lofty in a sublime theism, deep in feeling, reflective, pensive, resplendent with the radiance of genius and piety. In Solomon we admire the charms of Nature and the tenderness of conjugal delights, and those primeval joys which existed in the garden of innocence and beauty; that matchless song of love, so tender and mystical and elegant, that it is accepted as inspiration. But in Isaiah we are carried to still loftier heights, — to the ultimate reign of peace and love, never dreamed of by classical poets, who looked *backward*, and not *forward;* we have revealed, more distinctly than in any other Hebrew writer, the hope of immortality, so dimly shadowed to the wisest of the pagan sages. Not merely the bright hopes of future redemption are presented in glowing strains, but also the glories of the reign of Him who brought immortality to light through the gospel, — that promised Messiah, around whom clusters what is most inspiring in the exalted visions of the prophets. Not only is he rich in varied imagery, but his exalted strains are adapted to both the services of the old temple-worship and the transporting music of the Christian Church; and all the utterances of the poet are in harmony with the theology of the New Testament, and the reign of love which Christ came to establish.

Such was Isaiah, poet as well as prophet: the

grandest, too, of all the poets in a land to which poetry was indigenous; for Palestine was as favorable to this peculiar development of genius as ancient Greece herself. That fertile country, at once European and Asiatic as it then was, was variegated with hills and valleys and plains, all cultivated to the uttermost extent, capable of supporting millions, though no larger than one of our smaller States; the hills crested with castles and cities, and abounding in rich olive-groves and vineyards and gardens; a "museum country," as Taylor calls it, with contrasts the most extreme; where trees and shrubs and flowers diversified the landscape, and where the warbling of birds and the music of sparkling streams invited to luxury and rest; where the climate was genial and the atmosphere was clear, and Nature was wild as well as cultivated, and the night more glorious than the day with its blazing orbs; and where shepherds and husbandmen, and flocks and herds, gave life to every landscape. It was in such a beautiful land, flowing with milk and honey, and abounding in streams of the purest water, shaded with all the trees of the forest, picturesque in its wildness, but enriched by labor, that the poet, alive to every thing beautiful and impressive, clothed his predictions in the sweetest and loftiest language that ever painted the creation which should succeed destruction.

The writings of Isaiah show that he was a poet, a preacher of righteousness, a statesman, and historian, as well as a prophet. His history was probably written before the book of Kings or Chronicles, since reference is made in those books to him as an original authority. But on this point I cannot

dwell; and I can only glance at his personal history, and the great events with which he was contemporary. In fact, we know but little of him as a man: we are told simply that he was the son of Amos, and saw a vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. How old he was when he died we can only conjecture, — probably about eighty-four. His prophetic ministry extended over a period of about fifty years. He was contemporary with Hosea, Amos, and Jonah, and with the later Assyrian kings before the seat of empire was removed to Babylon. He was a co-worker with the prophet Micah. He lived in Jerusalem, not far from the temple; and was probably allied by blood with the royal house of David. He had a wife and two sons, but led an ascetic life, and wore a garment of haircloth. Yet he was continually consulted by the king in all matters of importance, and seems to have had a commanding influence at court. His age, his talents, and his experience, gave force to what he said. There was a "royal air" about him in all his movements; and his high social position is unquestioned. He was a favorite with Hezekiah, probably his frequent companion; but it is supposed he suffered martyrdom under his successor, Manasseh.

It is the fate of prophets to be stoned when they are in antagonism with men in power. As a whole, however, his days were honorably passed in familiar intercourse with the great; and he wrote Uzziah's life, and was the leading counsellor of the king.

The most memorable events which occurred during his ministry were the invasion of Judah by the

combined forces of Syria and Israel in the reign of Ahaz, and the great Assyrian invasion in the eighteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah.

In regard to the first, it was disastrous to Judah. The king, the twelfth from David, was weak, timid, and inclined to the idolatries of the surrounding nations, but was not signally a bad man. Israel had always, except at intervals, been hostile to Judah since the great rebellion under Jeroboam. The king of Israel was Pekah; and he formed an alliance with Rezin, king of Syria, for the invasion of the territories of Ahaz. The combined enemies of Judah were so far successful, that they slew a hundred and twenty thousand of the subjects of Ahaz in one day, and carried away captive to Samaria two hundred thousand women and children besides, with great spoil, but were induced to return the captives at the expostulations of the prophet Obed and the chief princes of Israel. The conquerors then advanced to the siege of Jerusalem. In his distress, Ahaz invoked the aid of Tilgath-pilneser, king of Assyria, then the mightiest monarch of the world, whose capital Nineveh, sixty miles in circuit, founded by Nimrod or Asshur, dominated from the Armenian mountains on the north, the Zagros chain on the east, to Bagdad on the south, and the Euphrates on the west. It was natural that the desponding king of Judah should seek assistance from some quarter: but he looked to the wrong quarter, against the advice of Isaiah, who enjoined him to put his trust in the God of his fathers, and not in the king of Assyria; at the same time promising the divine aid. But Ahaz had not faith, and was blinded, and would not listen to the

voice of the prophet, nor accept even a sign from the Lord. Earnestly did the prophet-statesman expostulate with Ahaz, telling him that the king of Nineveh would prove a razor to shave but too clean his desolated land, and that there was no one to fear but Jehovah himself. The inspired advice was rejected; and the result of the alliance was, that Judah became tributary to Nineveh, and Ahaz a mere vassal of Tilgath-pilneser. He was even forced or induced to practise the abominable rites of the worship of Bel, the chief deity of the Assyrians, the Baal of the Philistines; and the whole of Palestine became the border-land of the Assyrian Empire, easy to be invaded, and liable to be overcome and conquered. No political error was ever made by the Jewish kings more pregnant with evil.

The consequences which Isaiah feared soon took place, — the actual invasion of Judah by the Assyrian hosts in the time of Hezekiah; the second great event which happened during the ministry of the prophet. Not all the splendid prosperity of Hezekiah, under whom the Jewish monarchy culminated, not his uniform allegiance to his God, not his grand reforms, and solemn sacrifices, and magnificent feasts, such as had not been since the days of Solomon, averted the calamities which followed legitimately from the blindness of his father Ahaz. Sennacherib, the most powerful of all the Assyrian kings, after suppressing a revolt in Babylon and conquering various other Eastern States, turned his eyes and steps to Palestine, which had revolted, with the intention of reducing Jerusalem. Hezekiah was compelled to make humble submission, and consented

to a tribute of three hundred talents of silver and thirty of gold, besides a cession of part of his territory, and the loss of two hundred thousand of his people as captives, — a great and humiliating disaster, perhaps as great as Prussia suffered from the invasion of the first Napoleon. Again Hezekiah revolted, and again was his country invaded with a still greater Assyrian host. But the king of Judah this time evinced remarkable energy; stopped the supply of water outside his capital; strengthened the defences; gathered together his fighting-men, and encouraged them with the assurance that help would come from the Lord, in whom he trusted, and whom Sennacherib boastfully defied. And help came, as Isaiah predicted and Hezekiah believed, in that marvellous pestilence which destroyed in one night a hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrian warriors; the most signal overthrow by the angel of the Lord since Pharaoh and his host were swallowed up by the waters of the Red Sea; a disaster which spread such rapid and dreadful demoralization among the invaders, that the over-confident monarch retired to his own country with the utter loss of prestige, and soon after was assassinated by his own sons.

Such were the great outward events connected with Isaiah's ministry. But, during that ministry, a change had been going on in the habits and manners of his nation, which filled him with alarm, disgust, indignation, and sadness. The general prosperity which prevailed, especially during the reign of Hezekiah, led to luxury, to vanity, to self-confidence, to phariseeism, and a forgetfulness of God as the actual and only Sovereign of the world. As a profound ob-

server of society, he felt that great woes and calamities impended. He saw the people stricken as with judicial blindness, insensible to the operation of those unchanging laws by which even the moral world is governed. He knew that the hour of retribution approached unless the people repented of their follies and sins. He clothed himself in sackcloth, and cried aloud, and with fervid eloquence, on the guilty nation to seek the Lord while he might be found. He first appears as the stern preacher, indignant in view of private and public sins, and even intensely scornful in his reproofs, especially those aimed at vain oblations and pharisaic ceremonies. He denounces the women in still more sarcastic language for those vanities of dress and ornament which in no age or country they have ever despised, and to which everywhere they still cling. Still more contemptuously does he speak of the men over whom the women rule, and whom children oppress. He is severe on all corrupt judges; on usurers; on all who are conceited, and wise in their own eyes; on those that are mighty to drink wine; on those that join house to house, and lay field to field; on those that draw iniquity with cords of vanity; on those whose glorious beauty is a fading flower. His language, so stern and terrible, is full of woes on rebellious people and rebellious nations, showing that there is no escape from the hand of an incensed God.

We do not know how the awful preacher spoke or looked, with what voice or what gestures, except that he was clad in the habiliments of the desert, — in the sackcloth of penitence and grief; but nowhere in the Scriptures are more terrible denunciations against

sin and against sinners. He does not invoke the vengeance of the Almighty, as David did, upon his enemies; but he shows, that, without sincere repentance, this vengeance is coming, is near, is overwhelming. He does not glory in this vengeance: he is oppressed; he is sad; he is filled with grief, and especially because the people were infatuated, did not know, did not consider, blinded by their exceeding wickedness; so that, like the old antediluvians, they were inclined to mock and deride and to ignore Him who still held out the arms of mercy.

But, great as was Isaiah in almost any respect we choose to view him as poet, statesman, or preacher, it is as a prophet that he is most renowned and most frequently mentioned. But his prophecies are not to us altogether disassociated with his great meditations as a sage; since from these are to be deduced, as from the prophecies themselves, certain fundamental principles ever seen in the moral government of God and in the history of our race, and which have an everlasting application. Isaiah was not a philosopher in the narrow and technical sense in which that word is ordinarily used; nor was he an artist in the arrangement of his writings. History, woes, promises, hopes, aspirations, and exultations are all mingled together in scarcely logical sequence. He exhorts, he threatens, he reproaches, he promises, often in the same chapter; and then he rapidly turns to Messianic triumphs and the restoration of the glory of Zion, and even leaps over to the period of the new heavens and the new earth. Repentance, faith, forgiveness, rapturous views of the glory of the Lord, are mingled in too close proximity to suit the literary taste of a Grecian

critic. But he has definite views, which are never lost sight of, and they are of startling force and impressive application; and it is these great principles unfolded in the writings of Isaiah on which I propose to dwell in the remaining part of this lecture.

And the first one which strikes me as underlying all the others, and of most majestic force and grandeur, is *the constant presence and direct agency of a supreme and personal God.* This grand and fundamental truth is not, indeed, original with him. Here he takes no new ground from the prophets and sages and patriarchs of the Bible, from Abraham to Malachi. He only reiterates with more impressive force. Abraham when he interceded for Sodom, Jacob when he wrestled with the angel, Moses when hidden amid the thunders of Sinai, Samuel when he declared to Eli the ruin of his house, David in his reproaches of Michal, and still more in his triumphal songs of deliverance, Job in the midst of his sufferings and misery, Elijah before the idolatrous king, Daniel at the court of the Babylonian monarch, — all, and others, recognized this personal Jehovah, directing human affairs, as the moral Governor of the world. "The biblical representation of the Deity," as Dr. Shedd so forcibly has written, "not merely excludes all those conceptions of him which convert him into a Gnostic abyss, and place him in such unrevealed depths that he ceases to be an object of either love or fear, but it clothes him with what may be called individuality of emotion and feeling. When the Bible denominates the Supreme Being 'the living God,' it has in view that blending of thought with emotion, that fusion of

intellect with feeling, which renders the Divine Essence a throbbing centre of self-consciousness. For, subtract emotion from the Godhead, and there remains an abstract system of laws and truths; subtract the intellect, and there remains the mystic and dreary deity of sentimentalism. In the Scriptures we find the union of both elements. According to the Bible, God possesses emotions; he loves, he abhors. The Old and the New Testaments are vivid as lightning with the feelings of the Deity: and these feelings flash in the direct statements of the Psalmist, — 'God loveth the righteous, God is angry with the wicked every day;' or in the terrible accents of Paul, — 'Our God is a consuming fire.'" The personality of the infinite and incomprehensible and supreme God, who reigns over the universe he has made, is the fundamental idea of the religion of the Jews, and antagonistic to the prevailing views of the surrounding nations, who worshipped the stars, the elements, Nature, even beasts and birds, and, still worse, the idols which their own hands had made. All the nations but the Jews were polytheists or pantheists or atheists; worshipping, whenever they worshipped at all, deities without the attributes of Jehovah. How permeated is the book of Job, that sublimest of all poems, with the idea of the majesty of God, and the consequent littleness of man! — this sublime Power, "who garnisheth the heavens by his Spirit, who laid the foundation of the earth, who shutteth up the sea with doors, who provideth the ravens with food, who ruleth over all the children of pride." Not less emphatic is David in almost every psalm, but with more tender sensibilities, and a live-

lier sense of divine protection, revealing the God "who rescues out of trouble, who has been our dwelling-place in all generations, who is the strength and hope of those who fear him, and whose name shall endure forever, reigning from everlasting to everlasting in righteousness and glory." So Isaiah follows in the same strain, adoring, fearing, and jubilant, full of the majesty and benevolence of this Holy One, "who meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and who sitteth in the circle of the earth, for whom Lebanon is not sufficient to burn." Who is this mighty God? To whom will ye liken him? It is He "who giveth power to the faint, who judgeth among the nations, who taketh away from Jerusalem and Judah the stay and the staff of bread and water, who purgeth the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, who shall punish the wicked for their iniquity, who shall destroy the beauty of the Chaldean excellency, yet who will have mercy on Jacob whom he hath chosen."

Yea, it is this Lord who giveth the bread of adversity and the water of affliction; who exalteth the humble, and putteth down the proud; who sent confusion into the camp of Assyrians, and gave a sign in the sun-dial to Hezekiah that his life should be prolonged, — everywhere a comforting, a consoling presence, hearing and answering prayer, giving power to the faint and weary; so that he who waits upon this God shall renew his strength, and mount up with wings as eagles. But why dwell on what is obvious to every reader of the Bible, and which was not only

recognized as a fundamental truth of Isaiah, and all the prophets, and all the patriarchs, and all the sages, and all the good of the Jewish nation, but also by all the lofty characters who have since lived under the gospel dispensation? There can be nothing profound in philosophy or religion which does not accept this cardinal truth, or which in any way conflicts with it. It is *the essence of idolatry* to repudiate it. Luther embodied the whole soul of Isaiah in his immortal hymn, beginning with, "A mighty fortress is our God." Can it be that those Israelitish sages were mistaken in their conception of God and his government? or that any age in this respect, or any people, can be wiser or more profound than they? Has not the Church indorsed their views, when pure, in psalms, in songs, in hymns, in prayers, in the dissertations of divines? Do not our hearts and minds respond to this truth, especially in the day of our calamity? But you say, "Who denies such a truth as this? why deal in platitudes?" Ah! there are still many who say, "There is no God," even in these times of advanced and liberal Christianity: I mean, no such God as Abraham and the prophets recognized, or even Pascal and Edwards.

The great question of this age, said a profound and learned man to me lately, is, "not whether there is a Christ, but whether there is a God." The spirit of the ancient idolaters is hovering over us in mystic theogonies, in pantheistic dreams, in transcendental vagaries, even in scientific speculations, which reduce the God of Isaiah to systems and to laws and influences, — to any thing but a Being ever active in this world's affairs. Do "the more advanced" believe his

miracles? do they acknowledge his special providences? do they pray to him as one who will answer their supplications? Would they not rather explain away all his mighty wonders and constant agency by their philosophical theories? Do they practically believe in him as a God who punishes their sins, and rewards their virtues? Do they not live without fear of him, absorbed in their speculations, their vanities, their pleasures, and their idolatries? And thus is not faith undermined, and God ignored, and the very superstitions which the prophets abhorred and condemned virtually revived, and made idols of, although baptized with high-sounding names of progress and enlightened reason? Doubtless the progressive party of the false prophets of the age of Ahaz looked upon the teaching of Isaiah as little else than rhapsodies and declamation, and no more believed in his God than the Assyrian monarch himself when encamped near Jerusalem. But this unbelief is not wisdom; it is not true philosophy; and is as worthless as the old civilization itself, with its Babel towers, and its sorceries and pretensions, — rebuked by God, overthrown, as all idols are destined to be, whether Grecian or Babylonian, by his awful power.

With such views of God, especially in view of his holiness and justice, Isaiah brings out another great principle, founded on the first, — *the inevitable punishment of sin;* not a new view, but one which he enforces with startling emphasis.

If Isaiah had lived in these times of science, some might conjecture that he would present this truth in the spirit of a philosopher, — in view of his broad and profound observations of society. *We*

love to show this truth in the working of second causes. We talk of the natural consequences of violated law, — that evil necessarily follows its derangement in the moral world; that there is no escape from transgression; that laws are uniform in their operation; that as water will run down the mountain-side, as poison will destroy the body, as he who jumpeth from a precipice will be killed, as he that putteth fire in his bosom will be burned, as strong drink will undermine the system, so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his death. As love will call forth love, as hatred will produce wrath, so will obedience to divine laws, which are immutable and invariable in their operation, create peace and happiness, and disobedience end in the whole disarrangement of our moral system. Modern philosophy merely says, "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap;" that the indulgence of wicked passions will cause these passions to prey upon the soul and body, and thus produce a necessary penalty. All this is true and important. But Isaiah did not write in the spirit of Melville or Combe or Buckle. He had before his eyes the *personal* God, who made the laws, and was ever present to enforce them. He soared altogether beyond second causes to the great First Cause, who took a personal and constant interest in the world which he had made, and did not retire from it, leaving it to the force of his communicated power. He was not supposed by Isaiah to wind up the universe like a clock, and then to leave it to go round in endless circles, but rather to be always on hand to superintend its working. In accordance with this view of moral government, he beheld in God a stern and

awful chastiser, from whose hand and eye there was no escape, even should one "take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth." And one thing very noticeable in the mode of chastisement was the infliction of judicial blindness, by which men are led on to pursue the very course, which, in accordance with natural law, would end in their humiliation and ruin, even as God is said to have hardened the heart of Pharaoh. "Wherefore the Lord poured upon them the spirit of a deep sleep, and closed their eyes, — the eyes even of prophets and seers." Upon all sins he inflicts punishment. It is because "princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves," because "they do not judge righteously the cause of the widow and the fatherless," because "the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and mincing eyes, because evil is called good, and good evil, because the people cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despise the word of the Holy One of Israel," that the anger of the Lord is kindled, and his hand is stretched out in judgment. And especially is the judgment sent because of idolatry, — the crowning sin, since it is both forgetfulness of God, and rebellion against his government. For this most heinous offence the Jews were most signally punished ever since they had a history; for this they were delivered into the hands of their enemies; for this they expiated their folly by a seventy-years' captivity. And closely allied to this was the punishment for trusting in the day of calamity to any other power, whether Egypt or Assyria, than to Him. And not only upon the Jews, but upon all nations, are judgments sent for iniquities which cry to Heaven for ven-

geance, since all alike are under his government. To them there is no peace. After declaring the divine judgment in general upon all transgressions, and with the most impressive solemnity, — thus evolving the great principle of retribution which no one questions, and from which there is no relief, even though it may be explained by the operation of natural causes, — Isaiah soars into the realm of prophecy, and predicts special judgment on various nations; all of which came to pass. These are in the form of woes. Palestina, or Philistia, shall be smitten more grievously than by David or Uzziah. Tyre, the city of merchant-princes, shall be forgotten seventy years, and the pride of her glory shall be stained; "for out of the serpent's root" — that is, the house of David — "shall come forth a basilisk, and her fruit shall be a flying serpent, a winged dragon:" thereby indicating even more severe chastisement from Judah than what had already been inflicted. Moab, originally subdued by David, so proud and fruitful, should be again conquered; and, even within three years of the prophecy, its glory should pass away as it did before the armies of Assyria. Damascus too, one of the oldest and most beautiful cities of the world, should be reduced to a heap of ruins. Ethiopia, or Nubia, shall be scattered and peeled as it was overrun by Asshur. And the earliest and the most civilized of all heathen kingdoms, Egypt, shall be given over to the hand of a cruel lord, who shall rule fiercely: it shall be smitten and be conquered, and its people shall be led away captives, with every indignity that Sargon and the Assyrians could employ. Arabia also shall be smitten, and the glory of Kedah

shall fail. But the severest woe is denounced upon Babylon, the mightiest city of the world, the beauty of the Chaldean excellency. This city shall be utterly destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah, and so completely, that "neither the Arabian shall pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there, after it is destroyed; only wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and owls and satyrs and dragons." And wherefore? Because she trusted in her wickedness, and was perverted by her knowledge, and "said in her heart, There is none else beside me; I will exalt my throne above the stars;" and therefore desolation should come upon her suddenly, in spite of her high walls and proud towers, her sorcerers and astrologers, her armies and her wise men. The prophet even tells the name of him by whose hand the punishment should come, — even Cyrus; although the woe was denounced nearly three hundred years before Cyrus was born: a most marvellous revelation of prophetic power, seen not only in the fall of Babylom, but in the predicted restoration of the Jews themselves by this Persian conqueror.

I am well aware that many respectable men of the neologistic party get over this astounding prophecy by calling it an interpolation. But it seems it existed in the writings of Isaiah in the time of Cyrus; so that Josephus affirms that this remarkable passage induced Cyrus to send back the Jews to their native land. If there were reasonable grounds that this was an interpolation, I think that so great a commentator, so learned and profound, as Delitzsch, would have replied to it. But he accepted it, and gives his reasons, and shows how and why he was the Lord's

anointed to loose the loins of kings, and open the gates of brass, and seize the hidden treasure, amounting, according to Brerewood, to $631,120,000, — more than the Prussian Empire exacts from conquered France, if the relative value of gold is considered, — conquered as completely as Assyria was by Cyrus.

But the Jews were not to be restored until they should suffer the most grievous calamity ever inflicted on a conquered people, — so grievous, that the miserable Jews should sit down by the rivers of Babylon, and weep when they remembered Zion. Nothing can be more definite than the predictions against Ariel, the city where David dwelt: "I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee" (not the Assyrian, but God Almighty); "I will raise forts against thee; and thou shalt be brought down, and thy speech shall whisper out of the ground, and thou shalt be visited with the flame of devouring fire." And as for Ephraim, "his crown of pride shall be trodden under foot, and his glorious beauty shall be a fading flower." All these stern punishments are represented by Isaiah as the direct visitation of God, — he who formed the light and created the darkness, and against whom it is as vain to strive as the clay itself against the hand of the potter.

But, if God ruleth in justice, he also ruleth in mercy, which is as strikingly a divine attribute. And hence Isaiah, with his conceptions of God, is filled with hope and exultation as well as fear, and brings out a third great principle, — that *chastisement is sent in order to bring men into subjection to God's moral government, and to a consequent enjoyment of his favor.*

With all the sadness or fierceness with which he

denounces woes, he never loses sight of forgiveness and reconciliation. In regard to Judah, he is full of joy in view of the few that shall be saved; and this idea is so prominent in his mind, that he names his own son Shear-jashub, — "a remnant shall return." This was his watchword. Ever is there a highway for the *remnant* which shall return to Zion. Certain is it that the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, whom he hath chosen. Upon all the world, too, is the divine blessing poured, provided there be a return to God. The forgiveness is unbounded, and for any sin, even though it be as scarlet. What a consolation to thieves, murderers, and idolaters! What a cómfort to fallen women, and men under the torture and bondage of destructive passions! What a great system of grace is here unfolded, as if mercy overshadowed and overmastered justice! What an anticipation of the peculiar blessings of the New Testament, which reveals so distinctly salvation without expiation by the sinner himself, like that of the thief on the cross, and the adulterous woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears! The prophet proclaims redemption fully, boundlessly: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price," — unbounded forgiveness, if the wicked will but forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; not according to our notion of forgiveness, — for we would naturally execute vengeance to the bitter end on those who have injured us, — but according to His everlasting love, as mysterious as his justice itself. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, saith the Lord."

His love goeth out so boundlessly, "that the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and the trees of the fields shall clap their hands." Thus is the sternness of the prophet, in view of retribution, relieved by his exultant soul in view of a love which averts retribution itself: "For the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save." And here he soars beyond the Jew; here he is as cheerful as Jeremiah is sad. He is filled with hope. Not only shall Judah repent, — that is, a remnant, — but, for the sake of this remnant, mercies are to be bestowed upon the whole nation. Judah is carried captive to Babylon as a chastisement; but Judah shall return purified and wiser, and again flourish as a nation. The prophet not only lays down a sublime law of divine benevoence, but sees with far-reaching vision the glory of the redeemed.

Thus far, Isaiah appears to us more like a sage than like a prophet. He lays down laws of moral government. He dwells on the mercies of God, in spite of sin. He takes the broadest views of forgiveness. He embraces the whole world in his mantle of promises. He comforts all good people under chastisement. He speaks of God as a father as well as a judge, more mindful of his children than Abraham or Jacob. But he now sings another song, so rapturous, so full of hope, so exultant, that many commentators suppose that another man wrote the second part of the book; and even Dean Stanley indorses the view: but Delitzsch (I believe, a Jew, and a severe critic) brings conclusive reasons that the same man penned all parts of the prophecy. It is here, from the fifty-second chapter, that the prophetic

mission of Isaiah is most distinctly unfolded, and where he looms up above all other prophets; for, in the concluding chapter, he speaks of the redemption of both Jew and Gentile, which shall take place through a Messiah. Here he blends the forgiveness of sins, based on God's mercy, with the promised Deliverer who shall bear their penalty. From the expulsion of Adam from Paradise, God promised that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and he repeated this promise to Noah, and more impressingly to the "father of the faithful," from whose descendants this Deliverer should arise. For this purpose the Jews ever remained a chosen and favorite people, because the Messiah should come from their nation and from the house of David. This was their exalted privilege, according to the purposes of God, and for the sake of those who ever acknowledged him. And blessing is typified and foreshadowed in all the sacrifices of the temple-worship. The devout Jews were even consoled in calamity by the hope of future deliverance in the person of the promised Messiah. But Isaiah foretells in what form he shall come; yea, he predicts all the facts of his personal history. Had he lived in the apostolic age, he could not be more minute in his descriptions of the Messiah. Not only "shall there come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots, with the Spirit of the Lord upon him, to judge the poor with righteousness, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth;" but he shall be "a man despised and rejected; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; who shall be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; oppressed and afflicted;

brought as a lamb to the slaughter; taken from prison and from judgment; cut off from the living; making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; yet bruised, because it pleased the Lord, and because he made his soul an offering for sin, and made intercession for the transgressors." Who is this stricken, persecuted, martyred personage, thus bearing the iniquity of others? Isaiah, with transcendent majesty of style, declares that this child which is to be born, this light which should appear beyond Jordan in Galilee, is no less than He on whose shoulders shall be the government, and whose name "shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace; of the increase of whose kingdom and peace there should be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice forever."

And having announced this grand prophecy by which justice and mercy shall meet together, and the sins of the race atoned for by a divine being incarnated from the seed of David, a Saviour sent "to preach good tidings, to bind up the broken-hearted, and proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those that are bound," — which actually took place seven hundred years after the prophecy was declared, — the prophet-poet sings a yet higher song, and soars to still grander heights. He breaks forth in rhapsodies. He cannot contain his exultations. He sings as sweetly as he does majestically. His whole soul is ravished with the view.

For this deliverer from sin, this Messianic Saviour, shall reign as a personal King over all nations in

peace and righteousness, so that the people "shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it." In view of such a reign, whose seat was Jerusalem, Isaiah calls upon the earth to be joyful, and all the mountains to break forth in singing, and Zion to awaken, and Jerusalem to put on her beautiful garments, and all waste places to break forth in joy; for the glory of the Lord is risen upon the renewed land and the city of David, to which the glory of Solomon shall come, and kings and Gentiles also with songs and everlasting joy.

And here I must bring my lecture to a close, not without regret that commentators shed no more light on Isaiah's meaning in reference to the renewed glories of Jerusalem which are associated with the Messiah's triumphs. For the prophet still lingers over Zion, the holy city, *to* which the redeemed of the Lord shall return with songs and thanksgiving and praise, no more to be called "forsaken," but a city in which the Lord delights. All Christians accept the belief that a reign of peace and love shall be established on the earth when the Messiah shall reign from sea to sea, and from shore to shore. The hymns and melo-

dies of the Church are inspired with this cheering anticipation of millennial glories. And as good men in their prayers ever utter a sound theology, whatever may be their technical creeds; so does the psalmody of the Church break forth into the very spirit of the prophets, and is rapturous over the restored glories of the New Jerusalem and the peaceful and triumphant reign of Christ. The commentators on this interesting point are utterly unsatisfactory, sometimes pedantic, often narrow, and even uncandid; stretching the prophecies on their theories, not their theories on the prophecies; sceptical of what they cannot reconcile with accepted doctrines, and abandoning the higher realm of faith in the encroachments of the reason. They are learned in words; they overload their explanations with pedantic and ostentatious research: but they do not go where inspired declarations lead. They have not even the faith of the poets, who more often accept the literal word of inspiration, and therefore, unfettered, soar into the realms which Isaiah and other prophets reveal for the consolation of Israel. It is the great lyric poets who sustain our faith and warm our souls with their hallowed glow. They are the most immortal of men, since they touch the heart of all the ages, and, in their fervid piety, overlook all the shibboleths and parties which criticism and rationalism seek to perpetuate. It is from them, outside the prophets, that we catch the brightest glimpses of the reign of Jesus, whose throne shall be established on the top of the mountain; of the glory of Zion, and the restoration of Jerusalem; coming for a certainty, and sooner, perhaps, than we dream. In

the temporal ruin of the Papal Empire, in the fall of cities and kingdoms, in the light which is penetrating into all lands, in the shaking of Mohammedan thrones, in the opening of the East, in Ethiopia stretching forth her hands unto God, in the renewed interest in Palestine, in the cultivation of the now barren hills, which could be made as fertile as in the time of Solomon, we feel like uttering the inspired words of Isaiah: "Arise, O captive daughter! for thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles; and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel, when all flesh shall come to worship before me, saith the Lord." In the language of a great poet, we again repeat the promised joy: —

"Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy towery head, and lift thine eyes!
See a long race thy spacious courts adorn!
See future sons and daughters yet unborn! . . .
See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend!
See thy bright altars thronged with prostrate kings,
And heaped with products of Sabæan springs! . . .
No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,
Nor evening Cynthia fill her silver horn;
But lost, dissolved, in thy superior rays,
One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze,
O'erflow thy courts: the Light himself shall shine
Revealed, and God's eternal day be thine.
The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;
But, fixed His word, his saving power remains:
Thy realm forever lasts; thy own Messiah reigns."

VI.

THE GOSPEL OF THE HEBREW PROPHETS.

BY REV. GEORGE B. CHEEVER, D.D.

THE Hebrew prophets stand out among all races of men, and forms of vaticination, foremost and sublime. They appear in a superiority as striking above all common personifications of eloquence, and sublimities of action, as the volcano, the earthquake, the cataract, and the mountain-avalanche, above all natural phenomena. There is nothing ordinary or borrowed: every thing is original, and on a mighty scale. Their entrance on the stage, their parts, their exit, are unexpected, startling, comet-like. They shoot athwart the troubled evening sky of the Hebrew kingdoms, rendering the darkness and terror of the night of tempest and desolation more terrible. They appear and vanish like intensest lightnings in midnight storms, revealing the whole horizon in a ghastly vividness, and then leaving it in gloom.

Their number and grandeur increase up to the fulfilling of the destiny of the race and kingdom; and though they are charged with God's thunders, the tremendous denunciation of his vengeance against national and individual sins, yet are they plaintive, persuasive, and full of regretful, weeping patriotism:

they touch the deepest chords of sympathy with their exquisitely tender and affecting appeals. No poetry ever was so full of unaffected passion, none more completely the creation of the heart and of purely original genius.

This, indeed, is the effect of divine inspiration, a separation, a detachment from other minds, a possession by the Spirit of God, and the consequently unembarrassed and completely natural action of all the faculties of judgment and of genius. Each mind is, as it were, islanded in the ocean of divine thought, and presents a perfect circumference of native fruits and flowers. Under the most absorbing influence and possession of the divine inspiring Spirit, the mind acts with the most perfect freedom, and native, original power; the celestial influence not overbearing and repressing, but lightening, rarefying, elevating, the natural faculties, never before so free, never so powerful; that which, in uninspired minds, would be labor and art, being wholly the action of nature, transfigured, transported, spontaneous, more perfectly natural, because divinely inspired.

Besides the grand, continuous, *olamic* strain of yesterday, to-day, and forever, ever and anon thundering in the hallelujah-chorus of Messianic prophecy, they always had a particular mission for their own age, a definite design and sphere, a fire infolding itself, and a wheel in the middle of a wheel. Hence no unmeaning generalities, or sermons in the shape of essays, ever found place in their deliverances. Every thing is of purpose, has an aim, and goes to it as direct and swift as a cannon-ball. There are no palliatives, no courteous disguises or court-dresses,

for rude and bitter truths. God's message, whatever it was, sometimes individual and personal, sometimes national, to kings, princes, priests, or people, was announced without circumlocution, without apology, without any pleading for a kind reception, without the least regard to criticism or human opinion, custom or convenience. No shadow of fear ever fell upon the dial of God's truth in their hearts, or caused any hesitation in its utterance. The fiercest invectives struck like the lightning, with no more question as to consequences than Nature asks when God's voice breaks the cedars of Lebanon. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; but he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my word like the fire, saith the Lord? and like the hammer, that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

But with all this particularity and vehemence, this closeness and yet carelessness as to application, this grim, stern, exulting heedlessness as to whomsoever might be shot through the heart or offended, there was the widest compass of thought and variety of illustration, always simple and forcible, often homely to the last degree, and inadmissible for rudeness, according to the rules of modern rhetoric. The grandest truths, the most comprehensive principles, are shot forth in the proclamation of local messages. They are like chariots with wheels of fire-works, taking fire with their own velocity, and rolling on, enveloped in smoke and flames. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled."

Gray's description of the minstrel answers to the ideal of a Hebrew prophet as the imagination might present him under the force of a sudden inspiration: —

> "Loose his beard and hoary hair
> Streamed like a meteor to the troubled air."

Washington Allston's painting of the prophet Jeremiah is an equally grand conception. But no set of men has ever been known among the poets or priests of any nation or generation at all corresponding with the prophetic minstrels of the Jews. And for a very plain reason: because on the globe there has never been any other class of divinely-inspired orators or poets. The library of the nation (and it was a circulating-library) was appointed and prepared of God, not only with reference to future ages, not only as predicting and preparing the redemption of mankind, but with reference to the immediate intellectual and spiritual wants of the subjects of the old dispensation. The individuality and originality in the volumes of this Hebrew library are such, and the profoundness and comprehensiveness of the views and principles enunciated so grand and so transfiguring to the mind that receives them and ponders upon them, that, small as this library was (though, from incidental notices, known to have been much larger than most persons suppose), it was more disciplining, invigorating, elevating, than all the productions of Greek and Roman genius. It appealed to and awakened the mind's spiritual energies: "deep calleth unto deep;" a penetrating voice from heaven went through the heart and soul of all earnest listeners. Not as a luxury,

not for an amusement, not to beguile the time or win the admiration and applause bestowed on the development of genius, but under the guidance of God, in solemn and eternal earnestness, did these men address the nation, as they do now, through this library, address the world.

Their individual characteristics are as marked and unmistakable as the qualities of the whole class. Being raised up and inspired for particular emergencies, they have the sharp, rugged outlines and prominences belonging to such natures, developed by and for such heroic necessities. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Daniel, Ezekiel, while their ministrations all ran on converging to one and the same great consummation, are as separate and independent as if they belonged to different ages and nations. This spiritual unity from Moses to Malachi, the harmony of instruments so isolated and diverse across so many centuries, is one of the multiplied proofs of an unerring inspiration, completed in Christ.

These records of the elements of priesthood, prophecy, moral and ceremonial law, practical piety, providential history in the conduct of man, and the interpositions of God, are before us, reaching through a period of near four thousand years. The impregnable foundation of our faith is this, — that what was in times past spoken to the fathers by the Hebrew prophets was as certainly and directly spoken by God, and is as authoritative a divine revelation, as that which, being spoken in the last days by Jesus Christ, is called the gospel of his Son. The one and the other are equally the gospel of the grace of God.

A consideration of some of the following points, at much greater length than is possible in any one of these lectures, would be of use in the elucidation of the argument: —

1. The spiritual, prophetic, and historic unity of the Old Testament, from Moses to Malachi.

2. The establishment of prophetic schools, and God's covenant of a baptism of his prophets by the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the truth.

3. A comparison of the prophetical and priestly functions and their relations.

4. The causes and occasions of the multiplication of false prophets.

5. The relation between particular prophetic missions, and the central successive and permanent predictions of the great coming salvation.

6. The necessity of a close comparative scrutiny of the historical and prophetic books with contemporaneous fragments, whether in monuments or historic records, and equally of their examination in the light of the New-Testament revelation.

7. The combined moral and historical argument of divine inspiration in the nature of the personal piety developed in the Old Testament.

8. The records of the elements of such personal religion in the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Psalms.

9. The authority of Christ, final and absolute, as to the inspiration and interpretation of the Old-Testament Scriptures.

We can but glance at some of these topics, and combine others, noting inevitable conclusions or demonstrations as we pass.

I. — THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE PROPHETS.

Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, our Lord expounded to his disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Here we have an emphatic testimony as to the unity of the whole Old Testament in Christ, and the purpose for which, from the beginning, the revelation was founded and increased. Successive prophets received the torch of revealed truth from the hands of Moses, applying and interpreting the moral law; at the same time that a succession of priests ministered at the altar, serving God and the people in the ceremonial law, unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, the shadow of the great coming salvation. Thus, while it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin, — and the people knew it, for God's benevolence and truth would never have permitted them to suppose that it could, — the sacrificial offerings were a means of the conviction of guilt and the need of pardon. And so priests and prophets together ministered God's truth to the conscience, until the unfaithfulness of the priests, and iniquities of the people, required a separate independent class.

The appointment of the Levitical priesthood, as described in Malachi, was originally that of a comprehensive gospel ministry of life and peace: "My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips

should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."

But the priestly service might easily become a mere formalism, without life, kept up by men who were ignorant of the spiritual meaning of their own services. And so, in fact, the service and the priests did degenerate and become debased, till life and truth were left with the prophets almost solely, and the temple-service was either interrupted and neglected, or perverted and defiled. Because the sons of Eli made themselves vile, and knew not the Lord, but profaned his service and sacrifices, therefore God cut them off; and Samuel judged Israel both as priest and prophet.

Through individual ambition, carelessness, and forgetfulness of God, the priesthood tended from the first to the formalism and corruption of an ecclesiastical oligarchy. The process is described in Jer. ii. 8: "The priests said not, *Where is the Lord?* and they that handle the law knew me not." Then and there began the corruption; and immediately follows another step: "The pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets *prophesied by Baal*, and walked after things that do not profit;" kings, princes, priests, prophets, saying to a stock, "Thou art my father," till their gods were carved as many as their cities.

Thenceforward prophets were needed like the Wickliffes, Luthers, and faithful preachers raised up from time to time in the middle ages to testify against the apostasies and corruptions of the Church of Rome; and therefore they had the perilous burthen of a revelation and rebuke against priests, rulers, and people.

In reference to this commission, God says to Hosea, one of the sharpest of these cimeters, "Therefore have *I hewed them* by the prophets; I have *slain them by the words of my mouth:* for they have transgressed the covenant, and dealt treacherously against me." It was not an old hereditary idolatry of men that never knew better by any divine oracles, the heir-loom and education of Hittites and aboriginal savages, but the idolatry of deliberate choice and knowledge; of the passions and their vices against reason and God; of men aware of their immortality and accountability, but preferring evil to good; "brutish in their knowledge;" shameless, unblushing, sensual; "mad upon their idols;" the idolatry of conspiracy and treason, deserting God's service to hire themselves out to Baal. The work of God's true prophets upon such apostasy and rebellion required rebukes as of fire, the utmost energy of stinging sarcasm and broad anathematizing indictments, as in Isaiah, Elijah, Jeremiah. It was to be like the work of Samuel in hewing Agag in pieces before the Lord. They were to be God's broad-axes and claymores, cleaving and hewing by the word of God's mouth. The sensualists that had forsaken the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns and wine-flagons should have wormwood, and water of gall, to drink "Seest thou not what they do?" said Jeremiah. "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place; man, beast, trees of the field, and fruit of

the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched."

Under Samuel, the system of schools for the training of the prophets was gradually developed and perfected: "For all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh; for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel." The Spirit of God was declared to be always in and with the revelation: "Thou gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments, and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of thy servant Moses. Thou gavest them also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and testifiedst against them BY THY SPIRIT IN THY PROPHETS."

Thus all additions to the revelation were made by the Spirit, through men appointed or called of God, endowed by his Spirit, and sent upon their mission to the people and the nation, as directly and explicitly in every case, as if, as in that of the prophet Isaiah, there had been an ordination-service by the laying-on of the hands of seraphim, and the application of a living coal to the lips from God's altar, and the command of the Almighty heard by listening angels, "Go and tell this people, Thus saith the Lord." It was a well-known canon of revelation, that the word of God never came but by the Spirit of God: it was also announced and covenanted of God that the gift not only of his inspiring but abiding Spirit went with the word, for the interpretation of it

in the heart; for the guidance and benefit of the prophets themselves in speaking it, and the instruction and life of all sincere souls seeking it. Repeatedly and emphatically it is asserted, as in Isa. lix. 21 and lv. 8–13, "This is my covenant, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." On this ground they were made certain, as in Isa. viii. 19, 20, that, in seeking to the law and the testimony, — the written, unchangeable, well-known, infallible revelation, — they sought unto the Lord their God; and, whatever or whoever it might be that spake not according to that testimony, there was no light in them.

So important it was that the inviolability and full meaning of this assurance and authority should be guarded, because the whole salvation of the nation and of the soul depended on the certainty of a divine revelation, that, in the primal organization and protection of the system by law, the penalty of death was settled against the interpolator or pretender. He might as well attempt to grasp God's lightnings. "The prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die" (Deut. xiii. 1–5, and xviii. 18–22.)

It was thus that the prophet Elijah restored and vindicated the authority of God's law, acting by it to the letter, when he slew in one day the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal who had been

destroying the souls of the people by their pretended divination.

The schools of the Hebrew prophets were, beyond doubt, educational gymnasiums on this foundation, for discipline and use in the study and knowledge of the word and will of God by his Spirit. In the case of all sincere students seeking God's Spirit by prayer, it was a preparation for the consecration of their whole life and being to the spiritual work and kingdom of God; and it was the known presence of the Spirit of God that went far to maintain always for them such an almost despotic authority in every tribe and court, whenever they were called to convey the message of a "Thus saith the Lord."

The penalty of death against every pretender must have invested the preparatory work with great solemnity, and must have led to great searching of the heart, and spiritual wrestling for the true witness of the Spirit in their studies. And so the system grew according to the needs of a true spiritual life. At first, in the blade, and not in the full ear, as all God's and man's best things are a gradual growth of life, it was more under the law of eminent individual example and character, as in the case of Samuel. It was like the spontaneous growth of students for the ministry, before theological seminaries had been endowed and established with a body of instructors: they at first set themselves as pupils and under-workers at the feet of some master in Israel. At length came the organization of colleges, teachers, classes; though the particular system seems not to have been developed and settled till the time of Samuel.

Under his administration, Bethel was one of the

three places in Samuel's circuit as the judge of Israel, and became the seat of the earliest of these establishments. Saul himself met a company of the prophets coming down from the hill of God, with a psaltery, a pipe, and a harp before them; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied along with them. His case, and more emphatically that of Balaam, evidently shows that a man might be an actual prophet, inspired of God to utter what it pleased God that he should utter, and not otherwise, and yet not a regenerated man; the mind, but not the heart, being under God's control for God's utterance, and the word so uttered God's own word, infallible. But if so when only half the being was under infallible inspiration, and the other half merely compelled to submission, how much more infallible when the mind, heart, affections, prayerful sensibilities and sincerities, were all combined and fused under one and the same flame of truth and love, as the whole substance of a diamond burns under a compound blowpipe! and the whole immortal being, in that consuming and yet light-and-life-sustaining inspiration, was all at once human, natural, and divine. God's word, when it came through the soul of a prophet thus spiritually new-created, and filled with God's love, and every part and manifestation of the character drawn into a living unity, came with a glory and a power irresistible, and sometimes, if need were, sweeping as a divine whirlwind.

The instance of Balaam, as well as passages in the life of Abraham, Melchisedec, and Job, show how widely spread was the knowledge of the fact of prophetic inspiration, and how authoritative the influence

of it, the infallibility attached to it, even outside the border-lands covered by the records of Scripture. Indeed, the transit of such men across the firmament, and the apparition of so vast a circle of minds as they must have taught and influenced, are as windows opening out into regions of mystery, yet reality, where a heavenly intercourse between God and men, by the Spirit and the Word, is suggested, to an extent, the record of which, and of God's goodness in it, it never pleased him should be written down in our Scriptures.

II. — DISTINCTION OF PROPHETICAL AND PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS.

In a comparison of the prophetical and priestly functions, it is manifest, that, while the latter depended upon the system and fixtures of the ceremonial law, the former depended immediately upon God, and upon the personal inspiration of the individual by his Spirit. The priestly function in the way of teaching was like an engraving with an explanatory key: the prophetic function was a fresh revelation, with new warnings and commands. The functions of the prophets were, first, prophetic in our limited sense of the term, — predicting things to come; second, preceptive, — instructing men as to God's will and their own duty; and, third, calling men to repentance, and announcing the retributive wrath of God against sin persisted in. It was this last function, and the necessity of faithfulness, boldness, and unsparing pungency in it, that exposed the prophets to so much danger, both from governmental and sometimes popular fury. The profession of a true prophet came at length to be well known as a perilous, self-denying, self-renouncing

work. Seldom were they carried on the wings of popular applause; much oftener their eloquence was rewarded on the spot with violence and death. "Which of the prophets," asked our blessed Lord, "have not your fathers persecuted?" The priests, being ordinary fixtures of the law, were under no such pressures, either of responsibility or danger, if they chose to shirk them; but the prophets were preachers, who drew forth the coals of living truth from the ashes of formalism raked over them by the indifference and unbelief of the priesthood, and applied them to kindle fires in men's consciences. Through them the word of God came with present, pointed, new applications to present sins.

They took God at his word, and the word at God's mouth, and proclaimed it. There was in their messages a most amazing mixture of light and darkness, unaccountable to themselves; but they never withheld an unwelcome truth, nor doubted nor refused a glory because of its mystery. It was not to please men that the true prophets came; and they would not, in order to please men, consent to prophesy smooth things instead of right ones, or to withhold the messages of the Lord of hosts against a popular wickedness. They would not suffer men to dictate to them what part they should present, and what withhold: they were not as merchants, opening their wares for the people to toss over their goods, and select what pleased themselves, according to color and fashion; nor commission-merchants, ordered by the people to get for them goods of a particular stamp and texture. What God ordered they brought, and not what the people ordered or preferred. In

direct contrast with those who "divined for money and taught for hire," who prophesied "the liberty of wine and strong drink, falsehood and peace," forgeries of visions with a "Thus saith the Lord," "vanity and lying divinations," the prophet Micah is commissioned with a pall of night and wrath and darkness upon them, sentenced to judicial dumbness, and lips sealed in silent shame. "But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." And then he lets loose a battery of God's thunderbolts, ploughing Zion and Jerusalem in heaps; and then suddenly there bursts forth a sunlike promise of the Saviour, and the very mention of his birthplace in Bethlehem-Ephratah, his goings-forth from everlasting, and his saving majesty and greatness unto the ends of the earth.

For it was never the men that prophesied peace, crying, "Is not the Lord among us? no evil can befall us," and that forbade the denunciation of reigning sins, to whom God gave the privilege of announcing Christ; but it was those who were most faithful, even unto death, in the application of God's law to the conscience. While Isaiah himself was proclaiming the coming of Him who should turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and by his knowledge should justify many, it was equally necessary that he should preach in thunder-tones against the vast and reigning iniquities of king, court, priest, and people. And so we find in him and in all the prophets the most astonishing and awful contrasts, — gloomy black thunder-clouds and hurricanes, lightnings and tempests, succeeded by clear shining skies, balmy airs, and the softest

breezes; we have terrific jagged mountain-gorges, precipices, volcanoes, and then the fairest landscapes of exquisite and ineffable beauty in the colors of heaven. And, in fact, it is comparatively seldom that we are led up and down in green pastures and beside still waters: even in the Psalms, a great portion is dark and terrible with woes and wailings because of iniquity, and divine rebukes against sin. So that sometimes it seems to be the very business of those angels of God that wait at this Bethesda for our guilt and misery to trouble the waters, and our own souls also, before we ourselves can with any avail step down into them. We must be troubled and distressed, we must see our burdens and our evils and mourn over them, before we shall seek deliverance from them; and meantime, if we are not made to feel them, we shall be ruined by them.

If this necessity compelled them often to be men of contention and strife, finding Jeremiah's woe in their own experience, and the word of God itself a consuming fire, theirs was also the great burden of glory and joy in the work of manifesting beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Hence it is that the prophets are so often referred to in the New Testament, the priests so rarely. The spirit of Christ which was in them did testify beforehand concerning him; but, besides this, they had a vocation that still continues. The prophets were inspired for particular occasions, and preached to the times, by the Spirit of God, and thus, through the times, to the ages. Upon all the iniquities of their own age and generation they turned the lightning of God's truth, and so have preserved for the world, as

long as the world stands, a record of God's judgments, a series of divine precedents of infinite importance and of universal application. The prophets are witnessing and so acting at this very day, perhaps with greater power, for God, for humanity, for righteousness and justice, than in any age before. Their testimony is for bold, hardened, obstinate, stout-hearted transgressors; for tyrants and oppressors; for covetousness, slander, slavery, over-reaching, land-monopolizing, and extortion; for corporate and intrenched villanies; and for nations in their unbelief and pride. They speak to the conscience; they reveal the justice of God. They take up the strong and popular sins of men and communities in detail, and thus join with the law in preparing the world for the gospel. They are for this purpose, to all ages and equally, the sword of the Spirit, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. They are profitable for reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

III. — MULTIPLICATION OF FALSE PROPHETS.

From the time when the prophetic class were organized into something like a profession, with its university, there began to be false prophets, not called of God. That may have been the way in which they sprang up, taking the letter instead of the spirit, and assuming to themselves a call from God, and the authority of that call, on the ground of having studied for the ministry; mistaking mere knowledge for religion, and mere theology for divine knowledge. Such persons would be easily drawn away by tempta-

tion, brought into bondage under wicked kings, persuaded to lend their sanction to unrighteous laws, and at length to sustain even the abominations of idolatry. While none assumed the prophetic office and work but such as were called of God, we meet with few or no instances of falsehood and hypocrisy: but, when the prophetic function became a profession and a college-life, then there were many in it not baptized by the Holy Spirit; and the yielding of such to the will and wickedness of despotic rulers always put those who were faithful to God in greater difficulty and danger.

On the disruption of the Jewish kingdom at Solomon's death, and in consequence of his wickedness, there was suddenly developed, through the satanic policy of Jeroboam setting up the golden calves in Dan and Bethel, and inviting the people to a more convenient, sensually attractive, and accommodating religion, a school of false priests and prophets for the worship of Baal, audaciously and insultingly flaunting their demoniac ceremonial full in the face of God's own established prophetic school at Bethel. It was an antique infidel French revolutionary caldron of government, with harlots for prophets, and butchers for statesmen and prime-ministers. Thenceforth false prophets roamed by hundreds over the country, scattering lies and death. It was a characteristic description thenceforward of the worst successive kings, that they followed Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who taught Israel to sin. The besotted people willingly walked after the pagan State commandment, and permitted an idolatrous religion to be ordered and imposed upon them by the State; and so the opposing

schemes of heaven and hell became more and more pronounced and hostile till the climax under Ahab and Elijah. Ahab, Jezebel, and Israel maintained a crowd of false prophets and priests for Baal's worship of ferocity and lust; Judah and Benjamin retained the true Levitical priesthood: and so there were wars to the death between the companies of incarnate demons and the prophets of the true God.

A vivid illustration of the terrible enmities and riots ensuing is found in the life of the prophet Elisha on the occasion of his assuming the regency of God's prophetic school at Bethel: for God had maintained that seminary and its system of teaching and of discipline in the teeth and eyes of Jeroboam's devils; and doubtless both the professors and students (speaking of them in modern phrase) had much to endure from the scorn and opposition of the imperial, proud, idolatrous court and rabble that had possession of the city. Immediately after receiving the mantle, the spirit, and the authority of Elijah, Elisha went up to Bethel, assuming the government of the sons of the prophets there. Just before the prophet Elijah's translation, the two had passed from Gilgal to Bethel, and thence to Jericho, where there was another division of the sons of the prophets pursuing their appointed work: so that the last thing Elijah did on earth was to commune with the students at both these schools, informing them, that, on his departure from them, Elisha was to be their prophetic master and guide. So they passed on; and Elijah, in the chariot of fire, ascended to heaven.

When Elisha returned without him, fifty of the sons of the prophets came forth to meet him; and at

Jericho there was no disturbance nor contempt of his authority, nor insult from devil-worshippers. But these last had their headquarters at Bethel; and, though they had been restrained by the terror of Elijah's supernatural power, they thought they might safely insult Elisha in Elijah's absence, and perhaps revolutionize the school. So when Elisha, proceeding on his mission, went up to Bethel, the seat of the worship of the golden calves, then and there a company of blaspheming and idolatrous young men, fresh from the orgies of the demon-temple, and bent on the highest defiance of God, and his chief prophet, who they knew was coming to pursue the same course that Elijah had taken before him, cried out in scorn, "Go up, thou bald-head! go up, thou bald-head!" and they would have continued their hootings, cheered on by the vile rabble, as of Sodom, into the city, had not God's vengeance interposed. But God converted what they intended should be a procession of demoniac yellings and opprobrium into such retributive wrath and wailing as shot terror into the hearts of all the inhabitants. It would be a long time from that day forward before the young men, or the priests, or the prophets of Baal, would dare attempt another mob, or another insolent defiance of the school of God's preachers and seers, protected by the vengeance of such miracles. The prophet turned, and looked upon the raving crowd of idolaters, and cursed them in the name of the Lord; and God's justice fell upon them. She-bears from the wilderness, fit symbols of Jezebel's cruelty, who had slain so many of God's prophets, tore forty and two of them in pieces. It was by such means, in a period of insolence and

raging impiety, that God sustained his prophets, and caused the terror of his judgments to surround them in the presence of their enemies.

An unfortunate translation of this passage, as if it were a troop of little children that were eaten by the bears, has injured the record, and misinterpreted the meaning of this wrathful providence.

There is no question as to the right interpretation. It is young men, not boys and girls, who are intended. Comparing 1 Kings iii. 7 and Jer. i. 6, we find that Solomon when anointed king, and Jeremiah when appointed prophet, were denominated "children," and a "little child," by the same Hebrew words here employed. They do not mean what the English idiom represents. Well do we remember when, in pictures and verses in some of the primers of our childhood, we used to be horrified at the fate of these little boys and girls, as represented in the lesson and the cuts, running from the fury of the bears. It was very strange and awful, such a ghastly judgment on a troop of careless children, when so many worse sins in older people were left unpunished. It was not upon little children, who could scarcely be supposed to know what they were doing, that the judgment fell, but upon a mob of riotous, profane, blaspheming young devils, the worshippers of Baal and of the golden calves of Jeroboam. The city of Bethel continued the headquarters of this great wickedness, sacred to royal idolatry, at least a hundred years after this transaction. It became a sarcastic proverb, "Go up to Bethel and transgress."

The prophetical and priestly functions being so intimately allied, and sometimes combined in one and

the same person, if these two classes could be united in misleading the people, and had the government with them, it became a dreadful despotism. "A wonderful and horrible thing," said Jeremiah in such an emergency, "is committed in the land: the people prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" In this case, Jeremiah had been appointed of God — uniting the office and authority both of priest and prophet, being himself the son of Hilkiah, in the line of the priests in Anathoth — to proclaim God's word "against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land." "Ignorant priests," "brutish pastors," and "prophets prophesying by Baal," were indicted as guilty of a conspiracy against God; and Jeremiah had to confront all these classes along with the king in a conflict by the word of God unto the death. It was a priest and governor of the Lord's house that first put Jeremiah in the stocks; a priest and false prophet that accused him to the king; priests, false prophets, and princes that demanded the putting of him to death: for the word of God came out of his lips by the Spirit of God against every one of them; and, of all the heroic preachers whose career is recorded, not one was ever more faithful and intrepid than he.

IV. — RELATION BETWEEN PARTICULAR LOCAL PROPHETIC MISSIONS AND THE LINE OF MESSIANIC PROPHECIES.

The particular purposes and charges of prophecy never interfered with the grand, redemptive, Messianic tide: in fact, all these rebukes and judgments

for the support and purity of a divine revelation grew out of the certainty and everlastingness of redemption, which was the only ground and object of a revelation at all; and they were ministered because they were the instruments of redeeming love, — the blows and searchings of the schoolmaster along the highways and hedges, gathering scholars, and disciplining a guilty world for Christ's own teachings. The relation is, therefore, very necessary to be marked between the great loving burthen of prophecy continuous through successive eras, and the particular prophetic missions of instruction, warning, and correction in righteousness.

The grand prophetic purpose and idea in the work of redemption were becoming more and more fully developed as it drew towards its fulfilment in Christ. The prophets prophesied of a kingdom of universal righteousness, of the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth, through the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. These revelations are integral parts of the system of redemption from the beginning of the world. They crop out continually, as the primeval granite formation that is at the bottom of all things; and now and then they tower as mighty mountain-summits, or whole colossal ranges, above every other development. Isaiah, for example, is the Mont Blanc or the Himmaleh range in comparison with all other elevations.

Our Lord Jesus, when on earth, took his disciples on this survey, over all these ranges, from mountain-top to mountain-top, beginning at Moses and the prophets, and showed them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. He did not, at that celes-

tial interview, stay upon other instructions; but he did point out for their absolute certainty and guidance the things concerning himself. It was not that other things were not important; for he was continually adverting to those other things, and illustrating and transfiguring the moral lessons of the Old Testament in his preaching: but the things concerning himself could be best taught, and most lovingly, by himself in person; and, being so secured, they could then study all other things at leisure in that light. Indeed, the other things, so many of them having been demonstrated in statutes and precedents, in incessant precepts, and in the blaze of God's judgments, "which are as the light that goeth forth," were quite plain. But the things concerning the Saviour needed himself to interpret and fulfil them, being some of them mysteries from eternity, as unvisited as "the tops of the snow-shining mountains." But the things of common righteousness, and the human society that should grow out of redemption, — because redemption is the groundwork of Providence, and bears up the whole of human existence in a probationary state, — were as the valleys, plains, and table-lands familiarly inhabited and traversed. The streams that come down are mountain-streams, and the laws that govern are mountain-laws. The interposition of God's providence all along the lines of sacred history, and the particular prophetic missions, were as the stepping-down of angels from these mountain-heights to carry God's great ruling principles into action.

And out of the very midst of present passing iniquities, rebukes, and judgments, with which the prophetic pages are sometimes filled, as in the case of

Jeremiah, there suddenly shoots towards heaven a pyramid, a pinnacle; and a burning beacon blazes from it, and a flaming standard floats in the upper air in the sight of all nations. Such are the glorious mountain-heights in the twenty-third, thirty-first, and thirty-third chapters of Jeremiah, — summits where our Lord stood with his loved disciples as they journeyed from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and pointed out to them the glory of the Lord our righteousness, and of the new covenant, and of the name of joy before all the nations of the earth.

Thus, although the Hebrew people were so early divided into two kingdoms, — of which that of the ten revolting tribes was, for the most part, under the worship and despotism of demons, while that of Judah and Benjamin retained the temple, the altar, and the priests of God, — the lines of priestly observance and instruction according to Moses, and of prophecy according to Samuel and the prophets, ran on uninterrupted through all emergencies, wars, convulsions. As long as the temple-services were kept up, the law and the prophets ministered the same gospel of salvation. The Levitical priesthood were attendant on an altar of sacrifices disclosing the mercy of God in the forgiveness of sins on the confession of the penitent; and the meaning and efficacy of those sacrifices, through prayer and faith in "the comers thereunto," had been sublimely, and with fire of practical devotion, taught in the grand prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple as a house of prayer for all nations, the stranger as well as the native. In those supplications and confessions, rites and ordinances, the teachings of prophecy and sacrifice, combined in one fountain of light and life, for the soul, for eternity.

The system of types and figures in the law, as well as the precepts of the Decalogue, constituted a fixture of divine inspiration, where the priests, serving at the altar, kept up the fire and the light; but the prophets and their messages were, as often as they occurred, a new creation. The whole scheme of instruction was, like that of the ordinary course of Nature, interspersed with miraculous demonstrations. The service of the temple, with its incessant lessons of sin and redemption, foreshadowed the forgiveness of guilt through a Saviour to come. The need and assurance of God's forgiving mercy were written in the propitiatory sacrifices from the beginning. When we read in Leviticus, or in Numbers and Deuteronomy, the arrangement of types and typical services foreshadowing the great redemption for mankind, and note the part that each individual Hebrew had to perform with them, — priest, ruler, and all the common congregation alike required to lay their hand on the head of the sin-offering, confessing their guilt; and, in ordinary cases, each man bringing an offering or a sacrifice required to lay his hand on the head of the victim, confessing his sin, — it is as if we heard the sweet hymn of Watts rising on the air of the desert: —

> "My faith would lay her hand
> On that dear head of Thine,
> While like a penitent I stand,
> And there confess my sin."

They brought their own offerings, and slew the victims with their own hands, acknowledging their guilt, and casting themselves on God's forgiving mercy.

The priests themselves became prophets, teachers, preachers to the conscience, as they ministered those services of perpetual prophetic fire. The instruction, in that case, did not depend on a personal piety or inspiration; for the priests, in their courses, might be like those who conduct and serve the operations of the electric-telegraph, — keeping its services in order, attendant on its stations, writing down its messages. But they were not themselves necessarily inspired because the law was. They waited on the people as at a perpetual Bethesda, with its waters open unto all. They drew for the people from the great urn of light, as from the fountain of life, in its revelations of the coming Saviour, — a light which they kept revolving as an imperishable beacon, as a north star to the mariner before the invention of the compass.

In their appointed place, they were expounders and preachers of the law, but not prophets sent of God with a new and immediate inspiration. But God would have such a class. He would not only have an ordinary priesthood of the form, as established as the temple itself, but a special priesthood of the Spirit, holy men of God, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, through whom came continually new manifestations of the truth, which excelled in glory. The priests were attendant and dependent on the law: the prophets were attendant immediately on God.

The priest had come first, because the sin-offering by blood had been the first revelation of God's mercy after man's fall, foretelling a Saviour. Abel was priest; Enoch, priest and prophet; Noah, priest and prophet; Melchisedec, priest and king; Abraham,

priest and prophet; Moses, priest and prophet; David, prophet and king; Samuel, prophet and priest. But the prophets, by their direct inspiration, were invested with an authority direct from God, — God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets; and they were not, in any respect, dependent on the priests or satellites of the ecclesiastical system. They were the boldest, freest, most independent, most entirely unshackled set of men that ever appeared in the world.

Take, at the outset of the system, the appearance of a man of God recorded in the book of Judges, in the old age of Eli, just before the calling of Samuel. There came a man of God unto Eli; and, though his name is not given, his message from God is recorded, bold, sharp, decisive, concentrated, bearing a distinct prophecy, rapidly to be fulfilled, and burning like the lightning attendant on the thunderbolt. Not a word more do we hear from that prophet. He appears and vanishes, as if an angel with a drawn sword stood in the air and uttered his voice, and poured out his vial, and then withdrew forever into the bosom of eternity. Then comes the intimation in 1 Sam. iii. 1, that "the word of the Lord was precious in those days, and there was no open vision."

But now, when the priesthood was corrupted in the personal vices of its incumbents, and darkness was settling down upon the nation, the prophetic function was suddenly elevated, in the person of Samuel, to an instrumentality of great light and glory; and under his administration, and unquestionably by revelation and appointment from God,

the powerful prophetic institute was developed, which, two or three centuries later, we find disclosed with so great definiteness under the ministry of the prophet Elisha.

From Eli's priesthood, a sunset tragedy in storm and blood, to Samuel, Saul, and David, and from Samuel and David to Solomon and Rehoboam, the period of five generations is crowded with contrasted spectacles of shame and glory, — the passions of remorseful crime, the splendors of a pure devotion, the grandeurs of unexampled prosperity, the ingratitude of vast depravities, and the retributions of divine justice. The almost superhuman apostasy and wickedness of Solomon; the profligacy, tyranny, and corruption of a court of such boundless wealth and luxury, that the royal harem contained seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, many of them the flower and pride of heathenism; therewith, the audacious violation of the divine law, so that high places were built under the shadow of the temple for the worship of the most cruel and horrid demons of paganism, and gorgeous idolatrous chapels reared for the convenience of the monarch's voluptuous household, — introduced a reign of sin and pride, oppression, covetousness, debauchery, and impiety, requiring prophetic angels, as in Sodom, with a ministry of avenging fire. Thenceforth there was need of prophets of wrath and revolution, — prophets of denunciation against kings, princes, priests, and people; and equal need of prophets of encouragement to those who kept God's statutes in the face of governmental wickedness.

And we have examples of such faithfulness in the

history of Abijah, of Shemaiah, of that man of God who confronted Jeroboam, of Azariah the son of Oded, and Hanani the seer against Asa and Baasha, and Jehu the son of Hanani, the heir of his father's boldness and prophetic gifts. Then, in the life of Elijah the Tishbite, we have the concentration and culmination of all prophetic endowments, miracles, authority, majesty, power, faith, and intrepidity, in conflict against the incarnation, in Ahab and Jezebel, of the most ferocious and furious impiety against God and man. He appears like a comet at midnight, like a sun shot into chaos; and the great, blazing judgments of God flash suddenly and mightily amidst the darkness. Nothing else could have withstood the tyrant but God's power and wrath thus manifested. In this history we find indications of a multitude of prophets both true and false, — many hundreds on both sides. We have the record of Jezebel's slaughter of the prophets of the Lord by hundreds; and of faithful Obadiah hiding a hundred of them by fifties in a cave, and saving them from destruction. Then came the counter-slaughter of the prophets of Baal at the command of Elijah, — a most just and righteous retribution, since it was with their counsel and aid that Jezebel had accomplished the murder of God's true witnesses.

In the twenty-second chapter of this history, we have the vivid and instructive scene of the conflict between Micaiah, the son of Imlah, standing entirely alone in the word of the Lord, and the four hundred prophets of Ahab and of Baal contradicting and insulting him. Then we have the sublime transactions between Elijah and Elisha, and the ministry of both,

and the schools of the prophets, and the sons of the prophets at them, and rapid and multiplied miracles of God in this time of guilt, idolatry, and violence. We come down from reign to reign of wickedness, every third wave as a mountain, till the ten tribes of Israel are swept from the kingdom into Assyria for their iniquity, and Judah only remains, under the gift and guidance of that noble, generous, and believing monarch, Hezekiah, the illustrious friend and pupil of the prophet Isaiah, whose long and glorious prophetic career began more than thirty years before, and whose counsels and prayers carried Hezekiah through the perils of Sennacherib's invasion and the valley of the shadow of death.

Nearly contemporary with Isaiah were the prophets Hosea, Amos, and Micah: so that this period was by far the most brilliant epoch of all Hebrew prophecy; at least, so far as the written revelation is concerned. Then, within a brief period, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah appear, and within the same cycle, — the first part of the life and prophesyings of Daniel. Then come Daniel, Haggai, and Zechariah; and last of all, after the epoch of Ezra the priest, and Nehemiah the governor, and the restoration of the captivity under them, comes the prophecy of Malachi.

V. — AN INFALLIBLE INSPIRATION AND REVELATION INEVITABLE.

All these books of historic chronicles and prophetic records are enshrinements of the word of God: the histories are commentaries on the prophets, and the prophets are God in the history. The whole is a

divine picture in its frame; but the frame is intended and arranged with such skill and effect of shadows and cross lights as to be an essential part of the picture, having been contrived, carved, and put together by the artist himself for that very purpose. It is an inspired unity, divine, infallible.

Now, at this point between the old revelation and the new, we strike the central hinge and key-principle of both; namely, the necessity and reality of an infallible revelation. Taking the old, even alone by itself, we cannot release ourselves from this conviction. From the nature of the conflict between light and darkness, idolatry and God, in which these men were engaged, we conclude that they must have had the known certainty of a "*Thus saith the Lord*" to stand upon. They needed to see *light* in God, — light, and not doubt and darkness. They must have had a sword of the Spirit and a shield of faith. Not a step into such a battle could have been taken without it.

Comte supposes, in defence and praise of positivism, that the knowledge and firm belief once wrought among men, of there being no future life, no eternity, no God, would issue in a great advancement of human civilization and happiness, making men much more careful of life and time in order to prolong it as much as possible, and make the most of it by all the appliances of art and refinement in social education. Apply the hardihood of this argument to the other side. Even so, to make men willing spendthrifts of life and time for God and religion, willing to throw away a possession so priceless and irrecoverable for a principle, willing any time to die for God, there

must have been an infallible revelation of God and salvation.

We want no more inspiration and infallibility than are *necessary* for salvation; we insist on no more: but the attributes of God and the necessities of man claim *that*. So much we must have, or there is no reliable revelation at all; none proving itself to have come from God. It must be a revelation in regard to sin and redemption, if at all; a revelation in regard to a future life, if any thing; and therefore a revelation infallible, if at all, the stakes being of eternal life and death.

There is no gospel at all, either of prophets or apostles, or of Christ commanding them, nor aught that can be called such, but only that of eternal life in the redemption of the soul from sin and death. Therefore no material error is endurable. If we can affirm the probability that God would give a revelation, we can equally affirm the certainty that it would be free from falsehood, from any hurtful mistake. All the presentations of God that come from God must be pure truth. He gives those revelations as the bread of life; and he would no more permit a demon or a man to change them into poison, so that the villany could not be detected, than a father or mother would look quietly on, and let an assassin mingle a pound of arsenic in the white loaves they had set before their children.

If God had permitted the uncertainties of human ignorance, the mistakes of philosophers, the fables of story-tellers, the inventions of poets, or the fabrications of priests seeking a despotism of their own, and teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, to

be mingled with the sources or turned into the channels of pure celestial truth, it would have destroyed the essence and the possibility of a divine revelation, and changed its beneficent influence into death, making what should have been the water of life a poison.

If there is irregularity in a timepiece, it is the irregularity that rules, and not the true time. If your watch marks five minutes after twelve, and the train starts at twelve, your watch will carry you, but not the train. If you regulate the train by your watch, irregularity regulates it, and there will be destruction, — a collision with some other train running by the true time ; and, if the irregularity of your watch came from your carelessness, yours will be the blame of all the mischief, all the lives lost, all the property damaged. Just so, if falsehood be let in to a divine revelation, it is the falsehood that rules.

If a ship's chronometer is constructed with a deviation of one hour, twenty-three hours' right time may avail nothing against the one hour wrong. The ship may run safely twenty days, and then strike a rock, into the line of which the very first hour directed the ship's course ; and the man that made that chronometer, and put that variation in it, is chargeable with the whole destruction that is all but certain to ensue.

What shall we say as to any similar deviation from truth in the qualities of a timekeeper by which the course of the soul is to be run for eternity ? If there are no dangers, no sunken rocks, no reefs, no shore where there is not a perfectly safe harbor, then it is of no consequence what kind of timepiece we use, — whether, indeed, we have any at all. If all souls are

sure to arrive at heaven in the long-run, revelation or no revelation, then error or certainty in the revelation is matter of indifference; but if there are dangers, and the timepiece is given you for a guide, so that you may avoid those dangers, and follow your course safely, then it is infinitely important that your timepiece be infallibly correct.

The perfection of a chronometer does not require that it infallibly instruct the supercargo with what kinds of merchandise he should load his vessel, nor to what cities he had best carry his freights; the perfection of a chart does not necessitate information as to a science of the wind, or the mathematics of astronomy: but all that goes into the idea, and belongs to the reality, of a perfect timepiece, and a perfectly safe and accurate map, must be found respectively in those articles. They must not teach errors of time and place, since either would be the insurance of shipwrecks. Even so, while the perfection of the Scriptures as a divine revelation does not require that they be an encyclopædia of science, yet they must teach eternal and infallible spiritual truth.

VI. — THE WHOLE TO BE JUDGED BY THE PARTS.

Now, upon a survey of the characteristics of Hebrew prophecy, and its claims to the authority of a divine revelation, it is obvious, first of all, that neither its meaning nor its merits can be comprehended without a knowledge of the history and of the methods and occasions on which these prophetic inspirations grow out of and play upon the epochs and the kingdoms, the laws, manners, and characters, the knowledge and

ignorance, the moral duties and immoral habits, of the people. The vast sweep of time, the succession of reigns and revolutions, the development, growth, and accumulation of successive forms and habits of iniquity, need to be traced out, separated, mathematically surveyed; and only thus can the student of the Old-Testament history and prophecy understand the region where he is travelling. With such an investigation, the history is a key to the prophecies; and the prophecies, in their turn, are a key to the history. If you go through the history without the prophecies, you are as those who travel only through the valleys of a region of mountains, or along the course of the torrents, but never ascend the mountain-ranges, nor obtain an extended or connected view. Or you are like those who travel through a region of Alpine sublimities, shut up in carriages, along the beaten roads, lost to the glory of the landscape, and the landscape to them; while those who take the mountain-passages on foot scale their summits in the open air, command the heights and depths, and become intimate with the beauty and grandeur of the country. You must foot it from the history to the prophecies, and from the prophecies to the history, and thus you will know the intricacies of the whole region; which is, of a truth, interlocked with mountain-passes that can be crossed only on foot. For want of such an analytical and comparative study and survey, the history and prophecy of the Old Testament are a confused and heterogeneous mass and mixture in most men's minds.

The distinct and separate prophecies and their eras lie in a compact whole before us; and they are not to be confounded, but must be drawn out like the slides

of a telescope. The range of forty centuries is here; and the perspectives seem to be shut together as on a plain surface, with neither background nor foreground distinguishable. Now, if one should take a telescope, and attempt to see through it without drawing out the tubes, it would be no better than a common eye-glass, — not so good. And just so the reading of the Old Testament straight through, whether you begin at Genesis and go forward, or at Malachi and read backward, is just a shutting-in upon one another of epochs, eras, and perspectives in confusion, that need to be drawn out in their proper relations and connections. As the formative eras of our globe are in one solid mass of layers, epochs of history written in stone, so with the records of the dealings of God with his people, and the history of their iniquities and revolutions, and the accompanying interventions and intermixture of prophecies. It is a mass of history, condensed and crowded with an unexampled combination of minuteness and comprehensiveness. Hence it needs a patience, perseverance, and industry such as the geologist must exercise in digging, comparing, tracing; but great and fruitful is the result from such studies, and the reward is great.

Only three things are needed, — (1) a thorough knowledge of Hebrew, with the reading of these books in the original, (2) a knowledge of what is authentic in contemporaneous profane history, and (3) a knowledge of the combination and correspondence of sacred history and prophecy, — and the tournaments of infidelity against the Old Testament will cease. The Hebrew language ought to be as thoroughly studied and mastered as the Greek in all our

theological seminaries. Most of the difficulties would be removed, and the apparent ground or arguments or assumptions of scepticism quite cut away, if the Hebrew text, and the histories and prophecies contained in it, were thoroughly studied and understood, the dialects compared, and the books of history and prophecy accurately traced in their interlockings of eras and occasions, their correspondences and cross lights and witnessings, along with the simultaneous epochs and events of profane history, in the records in monuments and books, such as they are, of Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Alexandrian conquests and empires. When the parts are no longer rudely torn from their connections, but viewed under the light of the demonstrated unity and integrity of the whole, and when men cease to suppose or assume false eras, endeavoring to cut and square the text according to their assumptions, the fidelity and correctness of the Old-Testament Scriptures will be so established and well known beyond contradiction, that no reckless preacher or author will hazard his reputation as a scholar by assertions to the contrary.

VII. — THE PARTS BY THE WHOLE AND BY THE WORDS OF CHRIST.

Again: we are properly required to look at the whole system of revelation through its fulfilment, to determine its light by its purpose, and its purpose by its light, and both by their demonstration in Christ, with the object of his coming; namely, to save men from their sins. We are bound to look at the parts in the light of the whole, and to measure the meaning of the parts by what the whole demonstrates. This

applies with special force to the foundation and introduction of the system of revealed religion. Let any man read Havernick's section on the positive evidence of the unity of the Pentateuch, and he will see, not only how objections disappear, but demonstration is manifest, and how great a light is turned on every part by a contemplation of the whole in its integrity. Certainly the inspirer and author of such a work has a right to require the examination of it as a whole, and also in its connection with that after-revelation of which it is the first and introductory part.

But in that after-revelation, and in the instructions of the author of it, the first and fundamental thing was the assertion of the former revelation as being altogether the infallible word of God. The claims of the after-revelation were built on that acknowledged fact.

The second thing was the assertion of that revelation as a standard of judgment and condemnation for mankind, because it revealed the realities of immortality and a future retribution so clearly, that the proof could not be more convincing even if one came to them from the dead. Christ encountered the Sadducees on that ground on two occasions; and so afterwards did Paul, reasoning always with them OUT OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. On the first occasion, Christ took them in the books of Moses, because they refused the appeal to any other scriptures, and proceeded to demonstrate the great article of a future life from the Pentateuch. "That the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when God said, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him."

On the second occasion, a Sadducee was presented in vision on the other side the grave, in the world of spirits, suffering the consequences of his own unbelief of the future state of rewards and punishments, and desiring to present to his five brethren still on earth the same evidence that was now convincing him, in order that they might be prevented from coming, as he had done, through the same unbelief into his sphere of torment. Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them. They speak plainly what you find to be true." — "Nay, father Abraham; but, if one went to them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

THE CONSEQUENCES INVOLVED.

Now, there is no concealing the logic of this passage. It stakes the justice of God and the truth of Christ in the New Testament on the fact of there being a distinct revelation of future rewards and punishments in the Old Testament. It affirms the truth of that revelation, its necessity, and its adequacy for the salvation of the soul. It was given for that purpose. It revealed a Saviour sufficiently for that purpose, had there been a lowly, contrite, and believing spirit, instead of the veil of unbelief upon the heart.

Here, then, we find ourselves standing with Christ between the Old Testament and the New, in the very centre of the evidences for the divineness of Christianity, himself that centre. We are on the keystone of a bridge, whose arch rises into the heavens, and commands the whole vision of both continents of

the divine dispensations, spanned from pier to pier by the incarnation. We look back with him over the whole reach of the ages of revealed truth, from the book of Genesis, the first of the books of Moses, down to Malachi, the last and closing book of the Hebrew prophets before Christ's coming. The appeal of Christ is to all those books, as containing, in the law, the prophets, and the psalms, the whole truth received from God concerning the future state and the means of salvation.

The affirmation of Christ is, not only that it is all there, but that it is there from God; and that he himself, sent by God, receives it from no other testimony than that of God's word; never submitting himself or his doctrine or his claims to the testimony of man, but of God only. "The words which I speak unto you are not mine, but the Father's which sent me. I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."

Now, then, it is impossible not to be aware of the consequences to the New Testament, and so to all revelation, of denying that the truths of immortality and a future retribution are taught in the Old. Some men seem carelessly to imagine that this exalts the New, as being the only revelation of life and immortality; whereas it evidently destroys the credit of the New, as not being any credible revelation at all. Attempting to exalt the latter at the expense of the former, we ruin both: for it is beyond question that Christ drew forth those truths from the Old-Testament Scriptures, and declared them to be there; and the apostles, instructed by him, made the same affirmations. What, then, is the treatment given to his

words and character by those who affirm that the Hebrew Scriptures never contained any such truths, and that they were not revealed to the readers of those Scriptures, except through the Persian idolatries, till Christ came? Are the teachings of Christ in any respect trustworthy, if they are not true in regard to what is contained in the Old Testament?

The Old Testament and the New stand or fall together in the veracity of Christ. They are both inspired, or both an imposture. Is it lawful to reason from the New to the Old, from Christ to Moses, and from Christ to the apostles, and from them to Moses? If it be, then the revelation of immortality and the future life is established beyond all possibility of question; if it be not, then the truth of Christ is destroyed, and there is no possibility of believing either in the Old or the New. There is no revelation at all from God, if it be not, in the Old Testament, a revelation of immortality; and that was the ground taken by Paul, that, if Christ be not raised, there is no resurrection, and those who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished, and all the pretended revelation is a false witness for God. So, if the dead rise not, inasmuch as that is a part of the only revelation ever pretended to have come from God, it leaves us to atheism; for a God worth believing in would never have left his creatures without any knowledge of himself, nor could ever have promised what he doth not fulfil.

But now we are meeting continually with men who reject even scornfully all claim of an infallible divine inspiration in the Old-Testament Scriptures, who nevertheless profess the highest veneration for the

character of Christ, and declare that they regard the words of Jesus as truly divine and infallible. It is impossible adequately to illustrate the greatness of this inconsistency.

For example, I have a friend whom I have all but worshipped, always assuring both himself and others that I perfectly believe in him, and respect and trust him as a person of incorruptible integrity, and unrivalled knowledge, skill, and ability in his own business. He is the owner of a patent of great utility and value in India-rubber; and he affirms that the property in this patent descended to him from a lineal ancestor four hundred years ago, by whom the patent was first invented, although it has ever since become more perfect by additional repeated improvements. I boldly deny the whole thing, and assure my friend that there was not only no such invention then in existence, but no such vegetable production was then known. There was not even the conception of it; but the very first notice and idea of it came in at least three hundred years later, being introduced by some persons who had been captured and long held as slaves by the savages in a country where the India-rubber tree was growing, and who, having got free, and found their way back to England, brought with them the first knowledge ever possessed of that wonderful production.

My friend repeats and demonstrates his case, and stakes his whole claim to be trusted as a man of veracity and integrity upon the truth of the demonstration; but I flatly deny the whole thing as an impossibility, — an invention greater than the patent. Yet I profess undiminished confidence in the words

of my dear friend; and claim him for my friend, with a greater knowledge, understanding, admiration, and love of his truth, purity, and powerful intelligence, than any other man living can pretend to exercise.

This is but a moderate statement of the case between Christ Jesus and those who deny that the immortality and future accountability of the soul are taught in the Old-Testament Scriptures, or who contend that these truths were first found by Hebrew captives growing out of and upon the *upas*-trees of Persian idolatry and philosophy, and by them first brought into Judæa. Christ affirms that they were written and taught in the law, the prophets, and the psalms. It is impossible at one and the same time to deny that they are there, and yet believe in the truth of the words of Christ.

But now, of all these records of God and man, it is affirmed that these innumerable actors and spectators, in all the ages covered by the Old Testament, knew nothing about the immortality of the soul and a future state of retribution; and, of course, that all this drama of human life has nothing to do with religion; that there was never a pious man in all the Hebrew commonwealth or kingdom, — not one that knew God or true piety, or aspired after heaven, or lived for God and eternity. So that all these mighty events and warring elements of heaven and earth, with interpositions of God, angels, miracles, dwindle down to a fermentation of mere materialism, — the rush and struggle of intellectual and sensual passion and force in a progressive temporal civilization.

On the basis of such an assumption, the conclusion is inevitable that these books are forgeries, and not

one reliable word in them; and thence the mine runs under the New Testament, and the Gospels and Epistles are exploded in like manner. It is the fatalism of unbelief, — English, German, French, — Colenso, Strauss, Renan, — beginning with the position that Moses was a forger, affixing a "*Thus saith the Lord*" to what he knew to have been the product of his own brain only; and that Jeremiah was a forger, composing the book of Deuteronomy, and then revealing it to the Jews as belonging to the Pentateuch, in order to gain credit for his own impostures. The process of such destructive scepticism cannot rest, but involves the whole of Christianity.

VIII. — THE GRANDEUR OF PERSONAL CHARACTER IS TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR.

The moral argument of divine revelation is combined with the historical in the demonstrated impossibility of a life of faith without the knowledge of God and eternity. The piety of these men never could have been produced by the errors of heathenism, nor by any truth that did not anchor them in the eternal world; that did not lift them above the fear of man by a confidence in God, — the result of the assurance of his everlasting protection, and that involved to them the revelation of his forgiving mercy unto life eternal. The elements of piety in Abraham, Melchisedec, Moses, and Job, demonstrate this knowledge as an experience given to them of God. The interviews of Abraham with God, the designation of Melchisedec as King of Salem and Priest of the most high God, the bestowal of his blessing upon Abraham, and the majesty of their intercourse with kings

and their subjects, manifest the possession of a divine friendship, and the practice of a sublime spiritual worship. The same grand and elevated piety appears in Moses and Job. What gave these men the port of angels among men? What gave them their mental and moral superiority? It was no call inherent in idolatry that brought Abraham out of Mesopotamia. But what element did the religion revealed to Abraham possess superior to that of Chaldean shepherds, if it did not teach immortality and an eternal retribution? Accordingly, Paul's conclusion, thinking upon this phenomenon of character, is, that God must have promised a heavenly inheritance. What else should or could be at the foundation of the supernatural heroism and endurance of any of those worthies? If heathenism had ever produced its Abraham, — if only a mythical tradition in the idolatrous wilderness, — he would have been apotheosized: we should have found him among the stars or local mountain deities, an object of belief and worship. In the true record he is simply and only a man, the friend of God.

But that he should be such a worshipper and friend, living by faith, is an impossibility and a contradiction, without the knowledge of God and the future life. Such a moral character could have no possible existence otherwise, nor could it ever have been imagined. The very idea of a moral being, the record of such an existence, implies and necessitates acquaintance with such truth; nor is there any moral instrument for the Divine Spirit to employ upon human character without such truth.

Not only the character and teachings of Abraham and Moses, but the experience of Job, must have had

that spiritual knowledge in it, or there could have been no life unto God, no reasonings nor conclusions concerning his moral government, no knowledge of his will and providential purposes, no sense of responsibility to him. The same may be said of Samuel, David, Jeremiah, and all the prophets. They could not one of them have lived a holy life; they could not have known in what holiness of life consisted, nor what elements of habit in the soul were agreeable to God's will, nor how to seek or gain his approbation, nor what such approbation was worth, nor why it was necessary, but by the knowledge of God's eternity and their own immortality. Without this, the records of any thing imposed as a divine revelation could have produced nothing in the shape of moral character; and the Scriptures, destitute of all nourishment and guidance for the virtue and strength of spiritual beings, must have been, in the graphic image of Coleridge, no better than a SUN-DIAL BY MOONLIGHT, — a revelation merely for men's midnight and sleep. Indeed, what is revelation but moonshine, and the basking of the soul in it but a lunacy, if it do not teach immortality and God? And if men themselves blind their own inward vision by a cloud and curtain proceeding from themselves, woven from the steaming mists of their own passions, so much the deeper is their darkness.

The common sense, integrity, practical justice, sound, frank, and open views of right and wrong, freedom from cant and ostentation, the dignity and impartiality, the purification of their messages from all tincture of side self-issues, — no axes to grind, no nephews to be salaried, — all these characteristics are wor-

thy of note in examining the stuff of these religious documents. There never was a set of men so free from the extremes of legalism and antinomianism; so firm and definite, on the one side, in the proclamation of duty as the way of life, under faith as its principle, and the worthlessness of mere feeling without obedience; and, on the other, of the proclamation of love to God and man as the way of life, and the worthlessness of mere external observances. "Offer unto God thanksgiving; but, unto the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes? He that sacrificeth a lamb without the contrite and obedient spirit is as if he cut off a dog's neck; and he that killeth an ox, as if he slew a man."

And they proclaimed in the same breath the wrath and the mercy of God to the very same sinners. It was tropical storm and sunlight, rain, lightning, and thunder, in one verse; and in the next, for the very same trembling and affrighted fugitives from justice, the refuge of the yearning heart of God's love thrown wide open: "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Now, whatever be the difficulties that any mind feels from the scantiness of definite expressions in regard to immortality and the future life in the writings of Moses, or the absence of a creed proclaiming it, — though what believer in Christ can experience any such difficulty after his words? — yet they are tenfold greater, nay, absolutely insurmountable, on the theory that immortality and a future retribution were not revealed nor taught. That theory is proposed as

an article of critical assumption and belief in the assertion, "that the Hebrews, during the time covered by their sacred records, had no conception of a retributive life beyond the present, and knew nothing of a blessed immortality;" and this is coupled with the presumptuous affirmation, that, if there be any expressions in the Old Testament that seem like a knowledge of a heavenly life, "they were the product of a late period, and reflect a faith not native to the Hebrews, but first known to them after their intercourse with the Persians."

Now, to say nothing of the historic and demonstrated falsehood of this assumption, its distortion of the character of God, and destruction of the truthfulness of Christ, are such as would prevent the possibility of any belief in Christianity. It supposes God holding men to a moral and eternal accountability to himself, and yet concealing from them the reality and the grounds of it; shutting them up in ignorance of it, and yet holding them guilty, and condemning them to punishment, for the disregard of it. It presents God as selecting a people to be holy, and giving them a law for such holiness, and yet concealing from them the nature and worth of the soul, and the possibility of even knowing what holiness was; commanding them to love him, and preventing them from knowing how to love him; appointing for them a Newton for their teacher, and at the same time taking from them all knowledge of the prism and the rainbow, and commanding their teacher to compel their attendance on a routine of daily phantasmagoria, the moral meaning of which he was not permitted to reveal, and which they, consequently, were not permitted to understand,

and yet were punished for not understanding and obeying.

Out of what depths of confusion or malignity could ever so monstrous a supposition arise? If there be any thing worse than this in any caricature of the gospel as a system bigoted and cruel, any thing more subversive of all the voices of our natural conscience respecting the Deity, any thing more absurd to be imposed upon men in place of a revelation, or as a revelation of good-will to men, peace on earth, and glory to God in the highest, we never met with it.

Nothing can ever rise higher than its fountain. If there ever was in the world a true love of God, it was because there was a true revelation of God. If there ever was in any human soul peace and joy in the forgiveness of sin, or in the hope of forgiveness through the medium of God's teachings by the old appointed sacrifices, and instructions for his worship, it was because the good and eternal foundation and assurance of such a hope were made known through such a divine revelation; but they never were made known except where a future life was revealed, and could never possibly become known without such a revelation.

And if God has withheld from any race, generation, or era of mankind, in what they are commanded to receive as a divine revelation, all knowledge of immortality and a future retribution, and all appeals to the soul as immortal, he has made provision and laid foundation for nothing but the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. Nothing better than a carnal civilization and a carnal nature could have followed and sprung out of a religion without an eternity to

play into, a religion with nothing but temporal rewards and punishments, or a religion that provided and promised in the eternal world nothing but a renewal of the pleasures and pains experienced in this world.

Did God give to his people, for their training, smaller motives than they could get from nature, paganism, and their own conscience? Did God shut them up to this world? Such is the ruthless theory which sweeps the Old-Testament Scriptures as a typhoon, sending down bodily into the deep every ship freighted for eternity, every idea but of a gross materialism. If God could have saved and did save men in the old world, Jews and Gentiles, without faith, hope, belief of a future judgment, and trust in a divine Redeemer for pardon, he can now. If he did then, why not now? If he had a Church in the wilderness, marching to the heavenly Canaan without knowing it, without wishing it, without making any arrangements for it, why not now? If they, without us, and without the revelation of a Saviour from sin, and of an eternal redemption, could be made perfect, and could receive the promises without any promise at all, what need of any other promise, or any other discipline, or any other trial of our faith, than theirs?

But what an absurdity to call that a revelation from God which shut up the whole human race for four thousand years to less than the light of Nature! which the Old-Testament revelation did, if it concealed from the world the knowledge of the immortality of the soul and of a future state of rewards and punishments: and it did conceal if it did not reveal; and, if not revealing a future state and the evil of sin, could

not have revealed a Saviour. So that the whole human race, before Christ came, had no offer of pardon and eternal life, no presentation of any adequate motive to goodness, no hope except in this world, no offers of blessings but for this world, no possibility of communion with God as the father of spirits, but only as the framer of bodies; the inventor of an animal whose whole aim of existence must be to eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,—the admitted deduction by Paul of a true animal logic, if the dead rise not; and of course a right logic, if men are not informed of their immortality, and resurrection for a life to come. If we are only animals, it is right to follow out the law of a true animal existence; "and the far-sighted prudence of man, and the more narrow, but at the same time far less fallible, cunning of the fox, are both no other than a nobler substitute for salt, in order," in the strong language of Coleridge, "that the hog may not putrefy before the destined hour."

All the moral elements of the antique world, all its highest inspirations of passion and of taste, all the struggles and athletic discipline of mankind, all their mental and physical experiences, without this knowledge and love of God and these motives of eternity, could no more have built up one of those grand creations of genius, virtue, intrepidity, contempt of death, faith, prayer, piety, habitual martyrdom in witnessing for God's truth; those souls willingly on fire, and crying, "Send me!" when they beheld the glory of God; those Hebrew prophets that held themselves consecrated as self-consuming beacons for the warning of their nation, and the rebuke of great prevailing pop-

ular sins, — than the ranges of the Himmaleh Mountains could be raised out of stacks of jelly-fishes taken from the Indian Ocean, or the granite substance of Mont Blanc from the pressure of the grapes of the vineyards of Italy.

A teacher of inevitable error, such as the Scriptures themselves must become if immortality be not learned from their pages, would send men straggling and trembling amidst vague and ghostly superstitions; would educate men to cruelty and cowardice, but never to a conquering faith in God.

Even amidst the terrific apostasy in the reign of Ahab and Baal, there were seven thousand souls believing in God, and faithful to his law. Had that law given them no knowledge of eternity and immortality? The inward life of a child of God, and the intelligent reception of God's promises, by which a child's obedience and love could be maintained, were impossible without a knowledge of God as the keeper and rewarder of the faithful soul forever; and a revelation of these things had, therefore, been so clearly made for the faith of the people to rest upon in coming to God, that the evil of their character in disregarding and perverting that revelation is summed up in the description of them as moral monsters, because they were "children in whom is no faith."

The spiritual piety taught by the law of love, and the system of sacrifice and prayer, was that of believing, loving, and obeying children. For the production of such piety there was a congeries of divine promises, grounded upon or contained within the sacrificial ordinances revealed and appointed of God, as prefiguring the Lamb of God, who taketh away the

sin of the world; promises growing thicker and brighter in every age, and always the spiritual meaning clearer and more radiant, — no other salvation for mankind than that of the redemption of the soul from sin and death having ever been promised or made known by any one of God's revealing prophets since the world began; promises having their whole life and reality in that assured mercy, and growing out of it; leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations, the blessings of the life that now is and of that which is to come, on the same boughs of promise; but the distinctive purifying and saving element of character wrought out only through a belief in God entering into that within the veil of the eternal world; a faith in God, and a love of God, seeking God himself as the portion of the soul. This is the only sanctifying and sustaining faith that ever lighted up the flame of divine love in the heart of any human being.

These promises and this faith never came to the Hebrews from the Persians, to the people of God from the worshippers of Baal and Ashtaroth. The divine revelations which the Hebrews in chains carried with them gave light to all nations, but borrowed none. It is the most gratuitous, groundless, unhistorical supposition, that from Zoroaster, or the disciples of Zoroaster, was ever gathered or learned one jot or tittle of the doctrines of a future state possessed by the Hebrews, and proclaimed by Christ from the prophetic Scriptures. Not a fragment can be produced from all Oriental literature which is not surpassed by passages of Hebrew revelation existing centuries before the birth of Zoroaster, and promulgated to the Hebrews as their law of life from Jehovah.

The additions pretended to have been made to their stock of religious knowledge from Oriental sources, or from pagan mythologies or philosophies, were of no more value than the golden mice contributed by the worshippers of Dagon when they sent back the ark of God from Ekron to Bethshemesh. What the Hebrews did learn among the heathen from Chaldean and Persian sources, and practised to their own shame and misery, is found in the eighth chapter of Ezekiel, — an indictment of their guilt, and an appeal taken from such practices to the statutes and judgments of God's law, with the assurance that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

That lesson they never learned from paganism, nor how to save the soul from such a death. But they knew well what it meant: they were not destitute of common sense; and the appeal struck as a barbed dart into their consciences. Whether a man sinned or not, he should die the death of the body. There was never on earth an exemption from that, except in the two cases recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures alone, as windows suddenly flung open into immortality and heaven; but this message — "THE SOUL THAT SINNETH, IT SHALL DIE" — proclaimed a death of the soul over and above that of the body, even as conveyed in the language of Christ, — "YE SHALL DIE IN YOUR SINS."

IX. — THE FUTURE LIFE IN JOB, PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES, AND THE PSALMS.

The books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, contain arguments and reasonings in regard to a judgment to come that might well give to Bishop Butler

the foundation for his "Analogy of Religion" natural and revealed, — the most massive powerful argument ever constructed outside the Scriptures. They also detail a storm of doubts, questionings, struggles of unbelief, as potent in the proof of a then present knowledge of the distinguishing element of a divine revelation as if it had been sworn to as a positive creed. No man can read the book of Job, and question that Job's doubts were a wrestling with his knowledge, than he can read the two closing verses of Ecclesiastes, and doubt that the Preacher there was speaking of what he knew as clearly as we do, — a revealed future life and judgment. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." The hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm is equally conclusive; and so are the forty-ninth, fiftieth, seventy-third, and the ninety-fourth to the ninety-eighth inclusive. The constraining, effective, overmastering power of all these truths in the permanent transformation of human character is found in their appeal to an omniscient, heart-searching, holy God, and a judgment to come.

In the book of Proverbs there are equally pungent and unquestionable passages: "If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?" The questions and the method of them demonstrate a knowledge and conviction of their meaning and truth wherever

that revelation came. A cross-examination in a court, under the law, "Thou shalt do no murder," could not refer to things more palpable, and convictions more undeniable.

In the books of Job and Ecclesiastes these truths are not only conveyed in terse and separate texts, but drawn out into arguments of the righteousness and equity of God's government, because he will judge the world in righteousness, and give to every man according to his character; there, where there can be no more evasion nor triumph of an unjust cause; there, where every purpose and work wait; there, where God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.

The proverbs of a people are indisputable evidences of their opinions, their habits of thought, their practical conclusions. Such a declaration as this — that the wicked shall be driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death — is like a beacon of flame on a summit in the range of the Alpine Mountains. Its meaning is no more to be denied than the existence of the granite that surrounds it. The olive-leaf brought by Noah's dove into the ark was no better evidence to his senses that somewhere an olive-tree was growing, and that, where that leaf was plucked, the waters were abated. The moral sentiments recorded in the remnants of Hebrew literature bring similar announcements to our conviction.

In the lower Jura formations we are told by Humboldt that the ink-bag of the *sepia* has been so wonderfully preserved, that the material, which myriads of years ago might have served the animal

to conceal itself from its enemies, still yields the color with which its image may be drawn. The analogical lesson is obvious. The ink of the revelation of immortality is as fresh in the words of the Hebrew proverbs as it is in the ink-horns or on the parchments of John and Paul; and they are as indisputable evidence of a knowledge and experience of spiritual life then possessed in the soul, and spiritual lessons acted upon.

The elements of personal religion in the book of Psalms afford the same proof of divine inspiration. These men are not only taught by precept and instruction, but laid hold upon and drawn into the steps, motions, habits of spiritual life by sympathy and example; their own hearts being turned inside out, and themselves caught as with an invisible net and constraining power, and brought to God in confession and prayer. Take the thirty-second Psalm, the thirty-seventh, the forty-ninth, the seventy-first, the seventy-third, the hundred and thirtieth, containing such searchings of the heart, such confessions of guilt, such assurances of mercy, such instruction for man, such aspirations after God, such revelations of the nature and end of God's providential government! Out of all the remnants, or the boundless chaos, of what are sometimes called the ethnic Scriptures, out of all the remains of ancient literature, it would be impossible to collect a sum of knowledge and experience, profound, true, satisfying, self-evidencing, and answering the depths of human consciousness as in water face answereth to face, to be compared with the grave, solemn, weighty record of these six Psalms.

Take these Psalms, along with the hundred and

nineteenth, and compare them with the best extracts presented from Asiatic or Aryan fountains by the profoundest investigators and discoverers from Sir William Jones to Müller. The comparison is between human and divine; and no doubt remains which ranges on the one side, and which on the other. Take the last three verses of the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, and suppose *them* to have been discovered among the remnants of Buddhism. What an instant change from doubt to certainty, from darkness to light, from the confusion of a groping soul to the clearness of one that has an infallible compass! That compass, referred to, consulted, trusted, is the word of God, the known God, the ever-living God, the Creator, the Lawgiver, — the Word referred to as an infallible known quantity and quality; not a dream, nor an aspiration, nor a guess, nor a "Would that it were so!" but an absolute, eternal, all-determining verity.

Note also the profound impression, everywhere carried and sustained, of the definiteness, infallibility, and supreme authority, of the word of God. "Forever, O Lord! thy word is settled in heaven. Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever. The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting. Give me understanding according to thy word." *What* word? Where recorded? How known? How *made* known? By what process so communicated to mankind, and made the object of absolute knowledge, as that all doubt is taken from this praying soul seeking after God? It is a known quantity here referred to: the light of the sun not better established, nor his goings-

forth from the tabernacles of the east. Where is it? In what ark of revelation shrined? With what nation, unto whom committed to be kept, and in what quarter of the earth, is this Shechinah? This star in the east — does it rise out of Jacob, or Buddha? or is it in the cloudy pillar of a Zendavesta, putting forth such fitful gleams of light as one might show from decaying phosphorescent nature?

Nay, it is as clear, local, well-defined, as when God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide between the day and the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years." The book of Psalms, combining the prophetic, priestly, legislative, preceptive, instructive, educational qualities of the whole revelation, in the disclosure of an experimental life through all trials and vicissitudes, is the central, practical fruit and light of a great, established, long-tried SYSTEM of laws, letters, and ordained customs, the HISTORY of which, and of the nation framed and trained out of them and by them, is the oldest, most authentic, indisputable, and perfectly vouched for, of all that has ever been known or believed in history in the world; teaching and touching all the world at more points, accompanied by more incidental and unexpected confirmations impossible to have been pre-ordained or arranged by human ingenuity or knowledge, more inseparable life threads and figures interwoven as warp and woof with the very geography of our earth and the progress of its families, than any and all other historic and traditionary knowledges.

For determination of place, chronology, genealogy, logical succession of facts, eras, characters, plans, pur-

poses, execution, marching on uninterrupted across gulfs filled in elsewhere with myths of lost empires, races, reigns, a unity unbroken, an accuracy challenging investigation, and defying contradiction, there is nothing to be compared with it. There is the same power of evidence in all the records of personal experience; and the *Nepenthe* of a divine inspiration drops forth wherever God's trees of righteousness are tapped, — "the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." We find in the most artless confessions and prayers of the Hebrew prophets whole trains of thought and feeling entirely beyond the power of Nature, and bearing in themselves the proof that they are from heaven. The experiences of Moses and Isaiah, of David, Daniel, and Jeremiah, of Samuel, Elijah, Hosea, Micah, Habakkuk, Malachi, and likewise the records of their teachings, carry irresistible conviction of an origin above the reach of human genius. You know them to be meteoric masses. There never was, and never will be, any instance of such experience or such sentiments in the heart of uninspired humanity, unregenerate and untaught by divine grace. If you should see a tree in the forest struck with lightning, and bursting into a bright blaze in the midst of a pouring rain-storm, that would be no greater proof of a superhuman electric agency than the discovery of such sentiments in the sacred pages is demonstrative of a divine origin.

But none of the universal life-giving truths embodied in the progress of these records, amidst all the local storms and conflicts of a troubled life, are marvellous after the disclosure of the creative fountain-law by Moses, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God

with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." There is nothing more superhuman than this, nothing strange after this; and Love Incarnate has taught us that on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. When the prophet Micah says, "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, O man! but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" and Hosea, "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice;" and Isaiah, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word;" and Habakkuk, "The just shall live by his faith; I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation;" and when Job says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord; I know, though I die, that my Redeemer liveth," — these are all natural and consistent products of the law of love to God, disclosed by the Spirit of God, and ministered by the same Spirit in the heart, but impossible to have been the inspiration and work of the heart by itself without that Spirit.

X. — CONCLUSION. — THE APPEAL TO CHRIST FINAL AND DECISIVE.

The testimony and authority of Christ are final and absolute; and his right to interpret the Old-Testament Scriptures is not to be disputed by any man conceding the fact of a divine revelation at all from God to men. His interpretation of those Scriptures must be received as irreversible, infallible; and whoever accuses *them* as being an imposture, accuses *him*

as being the greatest of impostors, for declaring them to have been the infallible testimony of God in regard to himself. His claims are rejected, and all Christianity along with him. He is not to be trusted as a Saviour, or even an example, if he is not an authoritative revealer to us of the will and word of God. BY THE SCRIPTURES OF THE PROPHETS, therefore (Rom. xvi. 26), and THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST (2 Tim. i. 10), BY WHOM WE BELIEVE IN GOD (1 Pet. i. 21), we have the complete and perfect revelation.

Now, if there be a revelation from God for guilty creatures, the matter and method of it being redemption from sin and the restoration of man to a divine character, it follows that the revelation must be infallible as to that way of redemption, and in all respects wherein eternal consequences are hazarded or concerned.

But whether the infallibility be secured by the unchangeable letter, or the ever-present accompanying Spirit of the Revealer, or both together, guaranteeing to the sincere seeker a right understanding of the covenant and way of life, is of no importance. The certainty demanded in a divine revelation is, that the soul may rest upon it with a perfect divine security above all conflict of opinion.

We know that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are such an infallible revelation, containing one and the same gospel from beginning to end. The position, character, and words of the Lord Jesus prove this, and uphold the revelation as a keystone doth the arch which was built by the help of side buttresses and derricks until the keystone was settled in its

place; but after that, all extraneous supports being taken away, it stands alone: and though the history of the builders, and their mechanical arrangements, were all lost, and though it were satisfactorily proved that every race before the known existence of the bridge was destitute of all knowledge of the principles of the arch and all the elements of natural philosophy, yet, the bridge being there, and the keystone supporting it, it is proved to have been built, and carries its own evidence of both sides having been the work of one and the same architect, and with the same design. Neither half can stand without the keystone: both parts hang upon the keystone.

As Christ stands in person and character thus embracing and upholding both parts of this divine work, with the way and law of salvation completely developed in himself, and that great prediction fulfilled, that the government should be upon his shoulders; so the principle of the revelation stands clear in both Old and New Testaments as a gospel of love, ordering all things with an eternal meaning and life, and holding all precepts and institutions in the bond or covenant of God's comprehensive mercy.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil." All being the revelation and work of Divine Love to man, the fulfilment of all belongs to man in his endless relation to God, made partaker of the divine nature through the instrumentality of the divine revelation, — to this end constituting a revelation of truth, eternal, infallible, the very truth of God without error, in order that concerning it the prayer might be offered by the Son, and with it the work accomplished, "SANCTIFY THEM

BY THY TRUTH; THY WORD IS TRUTH:" and, for the same purpose, the Holy Spirit always given to accompany, illuminate, and interpret the word in the believing heart; so that, if any man came to God at any one point of this divine revelation, trusting in him, relying on him for light, life, and guidance, he would surely find him. "Then shall ye KNOW, if ye follow on *to know the Lord.*"

VII.

THE APOSTLE PAUL.

BY PROF. G. P. FISHER.

THERE are two very different classes of persons, who, without any abuse of terms, may be called enemies of the Christian faith. In the one there is a latent hostility to principles that still find a secret approval in their own consciences. A more or less conscious opposition of their characters to truth that is known or surmised to exist in the Christian system is at the bottom of their hatred of it. In the other class, however their enmity may be traced to a wrong bias of will, or perverse tempers of feeling, as the ultimate source, the immediate, conscious ground of it is quite diverse. There is no immoral practice, no unrighteous course of conduct, that shrinks from the rebuke uttered in the gospel. There is no guilty fear of the light; there is no honest conviction smothered: but they hate Christianity because they misconceive its doctrine, or deem it to be at war with something which they hold as sacred truth. From their education, falling in, perhaps, with their native intellectual tendencies, or from some other influence, they have come to cherish, with their whole soul, beliefs that appear to clash with the Christian system. From

their point of view, they cannot do otherwise than misjudge, and, it may be, detest it. Now, as one of this class can be moved to embrace the religion which he has hated, only by being enlightened; so, in case he does embrace it, let the change be never so radical, there will be a certain continuity between his life before and his life after his conversion. His previous position, with whatever moral fault he may charge himself, he can justly attribute to a misapprehension. His new views are a rectification of the old. Underneath the contrariety, there are some hidden threads of unity. The old conception has proved at least a stepping-stone to the new. Opposite as his new life seems to his former career, there is a logical and moral bond between the two. Paradoxical as it may appear, a thread of consistency passes over from the earlier to the later period of his history.

In this class of antagonists of the Christian faith belonged Saul of Tarsus. He was, in a sense, an intensely religious man before he believed in Jesus of Nazareth. Religion, the relations of man to God, was the ruling, absorbing thought of his mind. It was not science or learning, or any purely mundane interest or occupation, that engaged his attention. It was religion, — the relation of the soul to God and the supernatural order. And he was not less sincere in the profession than he was earnest in the practice of his creed. If there were many Pharisees who delighted in the hollow reputation of sanctity, — knaves and impostors, all whose thoughts centred in themselves, — Paul was at the farthest remove from all such. He was elevated above the influence of a vulgar ambition, and he was an utter stranger to insincerity.

There is no hint that he was impeded by any misgivings when he was performing the part of an inquisitor against the disciples of Jesus. The phrase, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," refers to no struggle in his own mind: it simply asserts the futility of the attempt to withstand the progress of the new faith. He had entered on an abortive undertaking; he had plunged into a hopeless enterprise: but he went into it with no divided mind. He verily thought that he ought to extirpate the new sect. He had no stifled misgivings, no scruples of conscience, on the subject. What he did he did ignorantly, in unbelief. He considered it afterwards a sin, but a sin of ignorance, the responsibility for which did not inhere in the act itself immediately, or in the opinion that dictated it.

Moreover, his ideal of character remained, in its general features, the same. Righteousness formed that ideal before he was converted, as well as after. In the earlier period, his idea of righteousness included both personal conformity to the standards of obligation, and that unqualified citizenship in the theocracy which involved a title to all its blessings, and, among them, eternal life. Righteousness, in this inward quality and outward relation, as a determination of the will and a consequent privilege, was to him the sum of all good. But now we come to the contrast. He first thought that the way to attain righteousness, and the only way, was to obey the Mosaic statutes, — the moral and ceremonial ordinances at the foundation of the Hebrew theocratic commonwealth. The Mosaic institute, in which ethical and ritual precepts were interwoven, he con-

ceived of as something permanent and eternal. That visible form of society, which had God for its direct author, was to endure as long as the sun and moon. There was no hope for mankind except in the extension of this kingdom. Hence Paul joined the sect whose zeal to bring in the heathen moved them "to compass sea and land to make one proselyte;" the sect at the head of that aggressive Judaism, the progress of which led a Roman philosopher to declare that the conquered had given laws to the conquerors. Hence, too, the cause of the disciples of Jesus appeared to Paul in the light of an impious and treasonable revolt against the divine order. To uphold the theocratic state in full unity and vigor, and to extend the sway of it abroad, was the first duty.

If, now, we look at Paul the apostle, we find him holding a different view of the place and office of the Mosaic system in the divine plan. That system no longer fills his eye to the exclusion of every thing else. It is only one link in the chain; one stadium in the series of revelations. He has risen to a more comprehensive view of the divine dispensations, where the function of the Old-Testament law-system is perceived to be subordinate and provisional; as when, from a lofty tower, one sees mountains and plains stretching far away beyond the previous boundaries of his vision. Abraham was before Moses; promise preceded law. The statutory system was an expedient, wholesome and necessary, not without sacred and everlasting elements incorporated with it, yet, as a system, destined to give place to a spiritual kingdom founded on a different principle. This kingdom is spiritual, the head of it being an invisible Person, to

whom we are connected by faith which takes hold of the unseen. It is thus a free and universal religion, in contrast with the external, local, restricted theocracy. The vast revolution of sentiment which Paul's mind underwent might be termed a deeper insight into the philosophy of history. The philosophy of history, the science that aspires to interpret the plan of God in the course of human affairs, has its beginning in the Hebrew prophets. The problem that inspired Augustine to compose "The City of God," and Edwards "The History of Redemption;" the problem on which modern thinkers of so diverse character — Vico and Hegel, Bossuet and Herder — have labored, — first presented itself to the seers of Judæa and Israel. In that old state-system, where the little principality of the Jews was surrounded by the mighty, conquering empires of Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt, what chance had that feeble kingdom against the overwhelming odds? What chance was there, when to the vast preponderance of force on the side of their neighbors there was added the infectious example of their idolatries? Then it was that the prophets, called by the Spirit, sometimes from the ploughshare, their souls filled and exalted with the grand idea of an indestructible kingdom of God on earth, pointed to splendid and opulent cities, the London and New York and Paris of that day, and predicted their downfall. They outstripped the sagacity of the profoundest of statesmen. Edmund Burke is admired with reason for anticipating events of the French Revolution; but Burke, in the very work that contained these vaticinations, said also that the military strength of France had culminated,

and was no more to be feared. And this prediction was uttered just before the wars of Napoleon. What is there more sublime in literature, when all the circumstances are weighed, than the words of Scripture? — "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." If one inquires for their fulfilment, let him behold the Christendom of to-day. The prophets themselves did not divine the full and exact sense of their own predictions. They had glimpses of the felicity of the kingdom in its future developed and mature form. A more spiritual worship was to characterize it; a more unfettered and universal character was to belong to it. Paul, after his conversion, entered into the import of these prophetical pictures, and found them verified and realized in the society that looked to Jesus as its head. The beginnings of this society antedated the law. The germ of it was in the theocracy itself. But the kingdom of believing souls, as it existed before, so might exist now, independently of the Mosaic laws and institutions. Regarded as a religious institute, they had fulfilled their end.

But Paul would never have reached this view, his conversion would have remained incomplete, had he not been driven outside of the law-system by the force of some inward experience. This was the painful conviction that he had been mistaken in supposing himself righteous. Instead of having attained that which he sought, he had fallen far short of it. He stood at a hopeless remove from the standard of character which a deeper perception of human obligations revealed to him. With the loss of the sense of in-

ward righteousness, his standing as a member of the divine kingdom was gone too. Instead of being a just or justified member of the theocratical community, he was a condemned person. Precisely how Paul came to discern, in this new light, the deep, spiritual demands of law, we have not the means of answering. It may be, that, in the crisis of his conversion, teachings of Jesus were brought to his knowledge by some of the disciples who instructed him, and that these gave new life to his conscience. Mr. Matthew Arnold, in recent clever essays upon St. Paul, is correct in asserting that it was not fear that lay at the bottom of his distress. This, at least, was not the chief ingredient of that sharp anguish of spirit which he suffered: it was, rather, the sense of unrighteousness. It was the humiliation, the piercing self-reproach, the burden of a conscious bondage to evil, that afflicted his soul. His self-approbation was undermined. Instead of approving, he must abhor, himself. But Mr. Matthew Arnold is wrong in ignoring the element of guilt as related to God, or the objective condemnation, that formed one part of Paul's misery. Paul, with all the depth of his emotional nature, had none of the unhealthy, one-sided subjectiveness that pertains to modern Pantheistic tendencies of thought. He was not shut up within the circle of his own sensibilities. He wished not only to be right before himself, but also to stand right before God. Besides the conscious servitude of his will to passion, — the "video proboque meliora, deteriora sequor," of the heathen poet, — there was the objective verdict of the righteous, infallible judge. Where did he get relief? Not from the law, in

whose commanding and forbidding there was no force that could overcome the opposing propensities of his nature. The law could condemn and threaten; but it could not create a principle of obedience. There was nothing in bare law to subvert the dominion of sensuality and selfishness. The result was a feeling of wretchedness, of self-despair. Paul turned to Jesus as a Helper. Jesus had overcome in the conflict with evil. He had died, but died victorious. The patient, self-denying Sufferer was a victor in the struggle. There was a loveliness in Christ that touched the sympathies of Paul, and kindled the desire to walk as he walked; and this desire was a new power in the soul, quite distinct from the influence of law. But moral admiration, deepening into sympathy, is not the whole of what the apostle meant by faith. There was a love from Jesus to him; there was a compassion of God, underlying the whole mission of Jesus. That love and compassion Paul believed in. The Helper whom he received was no distant hero, who exerted power only through an inspiring example; but he was invisibly present, to support, by the mysterious influence of Spirit upon spirit, the new life which he had awakened. Hold what particular view one may of the Pauline doctrine as to the significance of the death of Jesus, it is evident that Paul saw in it the means and the assurance of forgiveness. There is a foundation in his teaching for the ordinary Protestant idea of forensic justification. Righteousness had always to him a double aspect: it was both an internal quality and an outward relation. But what the law could not do was accomplished through the personal influence of Christ

upon the soul united to him in sympathy and dependence. Nothing in Renan's book upon St. Paul is more groundless than the implication that his personal character was little altered by his becoming a Christian. A new spirit of love took possession of his nature. In the room of the fierce temper of a persecuting zealot, we find a genuine humility, a constant inculcation of kindness and charity. When it is remembered that he was naturally high-spirited, and perhaps irritable, this change is the more touching. "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," — these are the traits on which he dwells. Against these, he says, there is no law. But they are not the fruit of *law:* they are the fruit of the Spirit. They have their springs in the relation of the soul to Christ. In this relation there was a great liberty. In regard to these very virtues and their opposites, the apostle writes, "Ye are not under the law." It is the Christian paradox of a correspondence to the law, but from motives and impulses to the law unknown. It was not the constraint of a statute; but "the love of Christ constraineth us."

Observe, now, the order in which this conversion, in its different parts or constituent elements, took place. It did not begin with new ideas of the spiritual character of the law, and with a sense of sin; but the historical evidence necessitates the conclusion, that a recognition of the truth of the claims of Jesus was the first step. The apostle himself, in his writings, attributes the change to a sudden revelation. Up to a certain moment, he had thought that he ought to put down the Christians by force. There was no in-

termediate process of reflection and inquiry between this state of feeling and his acknowledgment of Jesus as the ascended Lord and Messiah. He expressly affirms that this primary conviction was not imparted to him by the other apostles through the exhibition of proofs. How, then, did he obtain it? It was not by reflecting on the death of Jesus; for, apart from the consideration that his first belief resulted from no process of examination, the death of Jesus was, to his mind, one of the strongest arguments against the verity of his pretensions. To him, as to other Jews, the cross was a stumbling-block, — an insuperable obstacle in the way of faith. It is impossible, then, that he could have believed in Jesus, except through some disclosure of him, real or supposed, as triumphant over death, in a higher and glorified form of existence. Therefore the testimony of Paul on the mode of his conversion, while it accords with the probabilities of the case, tends to corroborate the narrative of Luke respecting the journey to Damascus. It is remarkable, however, and characteristic of Paul, that, besides the vision or revelation that formed the primary source of his belief, he discerns the value of external testimony. The resurrection of Jesus is verified, he affirms, by eye-witnesses, whom he enumerates, presenting the evidence in a circumstantial manner. There were a series of interviews of the risen Jesus: first with Peter; then with the Twelve; then with five hundred brethren, of whom the greater part, he says, were then living; after that with James; then again with all the apostles. It was a true and real manifestation of Jesus, in bodily form, to the senses of the disciples. The testimony is such, considering the

mental state of the witnesses after the crucifixion and the outward circumstances, as to exclude the idea of an hallucination; but it was a manifestation to the disciples and believers alone. The fact of the resurrection of Jesus was an indispensable condition of the apostle's faith in him.

Here we fall out once more with Mr. Matthew Arnold, who is duly impressed with the truth that Jesus, in the might of his holy love to God and men, died to sin and the world; that this inward death was perfected and shown in his death on the cross, and was the means of a true, spiritual, eternal life, of which all who are united to him in sympathy are enabled to partake. This, without doubt, is a vital part of Paul's religion; but it is not the whole. His faith rested on objective realities. Beyond his own subjective impressions and feelings, there must be the word of God. The resurrection of Jesus proved the acceptance of him as a Redeemer: it was the counterpart, the sign and necessary consequence, of his complete victory over sin. Without that verifying act of God, faith had no objective support, and was vain. The soundness of the apostle's conception of religion, as a relation to God, instead of a mere round of inward experiences, where the subjective feeling goes for every thing, appears very strikingly at this point. The Pantheistic drift of much of our modern speculation gets no countenance from him; and yet where shall we find an equal richness and depth of spiritual experience, or so profound a representation of what may be called the subjective side of the gospel? To die with Christ in his death, to live to Christ, to live because Christ lives in him, — these are his familiar

thoughts. But as the death of Jesus on the cross fulfilled and expressed his inward dying to the world, so did his resurrection express and demonstrate his life in God.

By the resurrection of Jesus to a spiritual and glorified form of existence, he becomes the head of a kingdom fundamentally different from that of the Jewish dispensation. The kingdom has shuffled off the carnal form which it had previously worn. The former requirements and ceremonies are something quite heterogeneous to its present mode of being. When Paul declares that he does not any longer know Jesus, according to the flesh, as a Jew, the member of a particular nation, with local and national associations upon him, he sets forth in the strongest possible manner, in a manner even startling, his consciousness of the altered character of the kingdom. The throne is not at Jerusalem, but in heaven. The offering is not bulls and goats, but our body and spirit, a reasonable — that is, a spiritual, or inward — service. The temple is not on Mount Zion, but is the soul of the believer. The whole conception turns on the fact of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

One might anticipate what attitude a man of Paul's logical intellect and fervid spirit, who held nothing by halves, would assume towards Judaism and Judaizing tendencies in the Church. A great amount of ingenuity has been expended of late in an effort to exhibit Paul as at variance with the other apostles on the subject of the admission of Gentiles to the Church, and on the whole matter of their relation to the Old-Testament ritual. As a means to this end, a deliberate attempt has been made to impeach the

veracity of Luke; or, rather, of the author of the book of Acts, whom the negative criticism denies to have been Luke. This last attempt breaks down, not only from the variety and weight of evidence in behalf of the genuineness and historical credibility of the book in question, but also from the failure to establish any contradiction between the general representations of Paul himself in his admitted epistles and the testimony of the Acts. These points are clear from Paul's own statement, — that Peter, James, and John required of the Gentiles nothing more than he required; that they recognized him as an apostle; that they rejoiced in the conversion of the heathen converts when it was reported to them; that they approved of the contents of his preaching, and bade him God speed when he went forth on his errand, they asking and receiving at his hand charities for the poor Christians at Jerusalem from the churches which he planted. At the same time, it was inevitable, and it is perfectly clear, that the original band of apostles, the first disciples of Christ, did not have at the outset that clear perception, and, with the exception of John, probably never had that sharp and vivid perception, of the antithesis of the new system to the old, which had seized on the convictions of Paul. The reason is, that, under the teaching of Jesus, they came out of the old system by a more imperceptible transition. Their religious life was a growth, in which their traditional ideas were gradually corrected and supplanted. They had never entered with so intense earnestness into legal Judaism as Paul had. They had not, like him, to renounce a definite system to which they had committed themselves with all

their hearts, and from which they were parted by a sudden access of light. Analogous phenomena occur at the present day among those who enter upon a Christian life. In some cases there is a conscious, abrupt revolution; in other cases, Christian character springs almost imperceptibly out of Christian training. A diversity in the mode of looking at the gospel is the natural consequence. The wonder is that the Galilean apostles could so entirely emancipate themselves from habitual, inherited impressions, as to welcome the heathen converts who had not been circumcised, and extend a cordial fellowship to Paul. But he was not only ready to tolerate the Gentiles in the acceptance of the benefits of the gospel: he would carry these benefits to them. He would enter into the broad field that opened itself far and wide before him.

The effect of such a course must be to excite the malignant hostility of his Jewish countrymen. He must appear to them in the light of an apostate, and become the object of that vindictive hatred which partisans feel towards a renegade who has deserted his associates and passed over into the camp of the enemy. But the development of the Judaizing principle within the Church was destined to be still more mischievous and annoying. Not all of the Pharisees who were converted had Paul's clearness of perception, nor had they tested by so thorough a personal trial the legal method of salvation. Hence they held with stubborn tenacity to the idea that the door into the Church was through the Judaic rite of circumcision. To concede this, as Paul saw, was to give up the gospel as a spiritual and universal religion, to cur-

tail the office of Christ as a Saviour, and to sacrifice the liberty of the heathen converts by subjecting them to a burdensome ritual. To maintain his position on this point was the battle of his life. By his instrumentality, more than by that of any other, Christianity was saved from sinking down into a Jewish sect.

In the encounter with Jews and Judaizers, Paul had an objection to meet, which at first must have perplexed his own mind, and which his opponents would not fail to urge with the utmost emphasis. Were not the Jews the people of God? Were they not a chosen nation? As such, were they not to receive the blessings of salvation? When it was found that comparatively few of the Jews believed in Jesus, and when the number of Gentile converts was rapidly increasing, these questions could not fail to arise. "If you are right," said the unbelieving Jew to Paul, "what becomes of election and the promises?" And the Judaizing believer repeated the inquiry. This brings the apostle to the matter of predestination and election. I do not propose to discuss the interpretation of the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, — the field which has been trodden for so many generations by contending armies of theological combatants, — except to say that it was no part of the apostle's idea to offer a metaphysical solution of the old problem of liberty and necessity, any more than it was his design, in the fifth chapter, to solve the mystery of original sin. All that I propose is to point out the historical occasion of his introducing the subject. The actual rejection of Christ by a great majority of the Jewish people forced him to consider their selection by God, and what the nature of it

was. In short, it opened up what we have called the philosophy of history, the character of the Jewish dispensation. There had not been a strict adherence to the hereditary principle on the part of God in constituting the chosen people. The principle of legitimacy, so to speak, had been set aside by his decree. He had not, as a matter of fact, been bound, in the past, by the mere consideration of lineage. Isaac was not the only child of Abraham, and Jacob was an example of a deviation from the natural order of succession; the reason being, in both cases, the divine choice and appointment. Therefore the Jewish theory of hereditary claims and exclusive national rights was a false one, as their own history proved. What should prevent God, then, if he saw fit, from giving the blessing of salvation to the Gentiles? There was no principle of the divine administration that imposed any fetters upon his will in this particular. Hence, if the Jews lost the gift, and the heathen received it, no one had a right to charge the Divine Being with inconsistency, or a disregard of lawful claims. But Paul does not leave the discussion without bringing forward his usual doctrine, — that the blessings of grace are transmitted in the line of faith, instead of that of carnal descent. It is not membership in a race, but faith, that puts one in possession of them, as the narrative of Abraham himself proved. The Calvinist will always point to the apostle's language about Pharaoh, and to the illustration of the potter and the clay; the Arminian will appeal to his declaration, that the reason why Israel had not attained to righteousness is because "they sought it not by faith," and that the rejection of Israel is tempo-

rary until the Gentiles have been gathered into the Church. Both unite in denying salvation by works or human merit, and in attributing all the praise to God; and this was the truth which the apostle had most at heart. I have often thought, that, had I the genius of Walter Savage Landor, I would compose an imaginary conversation between John Calvin and John Wesley, two men who were equals in firmness of conviction and energy of will, and with an ardor that impels them to pour out abundant anathemas against the doctrines that offend them. To Wesley, election meant the divine authorship of sin, and insincerity in the invitations of the gospel; to Calvin, the denial of election meant salvation by merit, and the insecurity of the trembling and tempted believer. Each fights the inferences that he deduces from the doctrine of the other; and each denies that the inferences of his opponent are fairly drawn. But how insignificant is the real difference between them when compared with what they hold in common! It is one consequence of the historical method of exegesis, which, in connection with a more correct philosophy, characterizes the biblical interpretation of the present time, that a new point of view is often gained, from which difficulties are lessened, and the rigid interpretation of the dogmatical school is modified, by the infusion of a more genial, penetrative, and catholic spirit. Even Peter did not find the style of Paul very perspicuous. His impetuous mind does not stop to fill out a chain of reasoning, or guard an illustration from a possible misuse. His swift mind leaves gaps for the reader himself to supply. His thoughts, in their hurry, jostle one another; and parenthesis is

thrown within parenthesis to help him in the utterance of them. Before one idea is fully expressed, it is overtaken by another; as a wave flowing into the shore is chased and overrun by the wave behind it. Hence, of all writers, he requires breadth and insight in the interpreter who would explore his meaning.

The Pauline type of doctrine is frequently brought into comparison with the types of doctrine presented in the Epistle of James and the writings of John. It is more obvious to students of the Bible now than formerly, that the inspiration of the apostles did not operate to supersede, but to intensify, their native faculties of mind. It was dynamic, not mechanical, in its mode of action. The effect of it was organic, — to elevate, to guide, to purify the powers of intellect and feeling, but not to supplant them, and not to extinguish their peculiarities, or check their free movement, as by an agency exerted upon them from without. Nor did inspiration interfere with the individuality of religious character that belonged to the apostles. What type their piety assumed varied with their natural traits. They were all dependent on Christ, and moulded by his influence; but, like various musical instruments touched by the same hand, — the lute, the organ, and the harp, which give forth various tones and strains of melody, — so is the characteristic nature of each of the apostles manifest. The inspiration of the apostles differs from the inspiration that has produced the masterpieces of literature, — first, that the former relates to religious and ethical truth; and, secondly, that the products of it are verified to us, and, for this reason, endued with authority. The divine agency here includes a

miraculous element, by which the sacred books are set apart from all human productions; even the loftiest efforts of genius, though genius may handle the themes of religion. But the human element, out of which grow the individuality, naturalness, and personal, living force of the apostolic writers, is not less evident than the divine element which has imparted to them an inexhaustible, as it is an altogether unique, power. When we compare Paul with James, we perceive that James puts forth no contrary doctrine on the method of salvation. When he declares that faith without works is dead, he shows that he conceives of faith as containing a seed of virtue or holy living, so that good works are not an adjunct of faith, but a necessary fruit. Faith has lost its vitality, it resembles a corpse, when it no longer produces right and benevolent conduct. This is precisely the conception of Paul. As to his relations to John, it is common to designate the one as the apostle of faith, and the other of love. There are current sayings like that of Schelling, who marks off three periods of the Church: the first being the age of Peter, the era of law and ecclesiastical order; the second, the age of Paul, the era when faith is held in highest honor, the age of Protestantism; and the third, the age of John, the coming age of love. Renan thinks to disparage Paul by calling him a Protestant, the forerunner and author of Protestantism. But turn to the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "Now abideth faith, hope, love, — these three; but the greatest of these is love." Without love, he declares, all gifts are worthless, — the gift of tongues; the gift of prophecy, — the eloquence of the preacher;

the gift of knowledge, — all intellectual superiority; the gift of faith, by which miracles were performed; the habit of alms-giving without stint; the martyr-spirit, — all are of no account without the love, which includes a gentle, forgiving temper; is the opposite of envy and jealousy, of mistrust, of rudeness and indecorum, of pride and boasting; the love which delights at seeing men good, and deplores their sin; that is patient under the burdens of life; that leaves no room for self-seeking. Love alone is the imperishable virtue: faith will give way to sight, and hope to fruition. "On each side of this chapter," says Dean Stanley, "the tumult of argument and remonstrance still rages; but within it all is calm: the sentences move in almost rhythmical melody; the imagery unfolds itself in almost dramatic propriety; the language arranges itself with almost rhetorical accuracy. We can imagine how the apostle's amanuensis must have paused to look up in his master's face, and seen his countenance lighted up as it had been the face of an angel, as this vision of divine perfection passed before him." Now turn to John; and what do we meet with at the beginning of his Gospel? — "To as many as received Him, to them gave he power to be the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name." Later we read: "This is the work of God, to believe on Him whom he hath sent." The love to Him who hath first loved us, on which John dwells, — what is it but faith? We believe in a love to us that has gone before all love on our side. Responsive love implies faith. Faith, in the doctrine of Paul and John alike, is the connection of the soul with Christ, from which love and all other parts of

goodness result. The unity of apostolic doctrine lies in the common view of Christ as the one Source of life. He is the Vine, sending life and fruitfulness through the branches.

Had Paul been less pure and disinterested in character, he would infallibly have been made the head of a party; but when he heard of the attempt at Corinth to set him in this position, and to organize a sect to be called by his name, he repelled the project with indignation. It was a kind of man-worship, and a dishonor to Christ, from which his whole nature recoiled. "Who, then," he said, "is Paul? Who is Paul? Was Paul crucified for you? Paul and Apollos are but ministers; and shall the servant usurp the place of his Lord?"

In connection with his warm utterances on this subject, he tells us how to look upon uninspired authors of systems of ethics and theology. There is only one foundation; and that is Christ, and his work as a Saviour. Whoever builds on this foundation is a Christian teacher; but he may mingle in his system, in the superstructure which he builds up by the effort of his intellect, wood, hay, and stubble, or elements of doctrine that will not endure the searching test. Building on the true foundation, he is personally saved; but the system that he has erected is a human work, is liable to imperfection, and will, at last, be sifted. In this light the great system-makers in the Church — as Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Edwards — are to be regarded. Their undertaking is legitimate: they may render a great service in the exposition and defence of truth; but they are not authoritative teachers; and, when an undue deference is

paid to them, Christ loses the place that belongs to him. If Paul was offended that his name should be given to a party in the Church, is there not, to say the least, an equal objection to the practice of Christians, in later ages, of arraying themselves under the banner of some favorite theologian?

Turning now from the doctrine to glance at the work of the apostle Paul, we find him, by the natural bent of his mind, a missionary. After as before his conversion, he was a propagandist. A life of contemplative devotion would have been intolerable to him. His favorite metaphor is drawn from the race-course: athletes and soldiers are his types of Christian manliness. There is one popular idea respecting Paul, which, I think, is ill-founded. He is frequently styled a learned man. It is true that he may be called a scholar, so far as the Old-Testament Scriptures and the theology and casuistry of the Jewish schools are concerned. As an intellectual man, he is to be rated above most, and probably all, of the apostles, who belonged to what was considered by their countrymen the uneducated class. But there is no sufficient ground for supposing that Paul was a learned man in the sense in which this term is generally applied to him. It is not probable that he had studied the Greek authors. Remember that he was of the stock of Israel, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; born, not of proselytes, but of Hebrew parentage on both sides. It is not improbable that his father or grandfather had been a captive in war, and, being emancipated, had acquired the right of citizenship which descended to Paul. But his father, though living in

Tarsus, a cultivated city, was a rigid Jew. Had he found his son reading a pagan writer, it is likely that he would have dealt with him as one of our Puritan ancestors would have treated a child whom he had caught reading the tales of Boccaccio. Transferred at an early age to Jerusalem, he sat at the feet of the Jewish doctor, Gamaliel. Here the method of instruction was interlocutory; a stimulating method, which was practised also by the masters of Greek philosophy, and is too little in vogue in our modern schemes of education. Gamaliel is represented in the Jewish tradition as more tolerant in reference to Greek wisdom than most of the rabbis of that day. He gave advice to the Sanhedrim that might indicate that the apostles had made some impression on him of a favorable kind; but, on the other hand, might imply an expectation on his part that the new sect would soon die a natural death. The president of the Sanhedrim, it is not probable that he had any real inclination towards the Christian doctrine, except as far as it recognized the belief in a resurrection, which the Pharisees also cherished. But, whatever was the temper of the teacher, we know very well what were the sentiments and spirit of the pupil. "After the straitest sect of our religion," he says, "I lived a Pharisee;" . . . "concerning zeal, persecuting the Church." After his conversion, and his return from Arabia, he spent several years again at Tarsus. Here it is reasonable to suppose that he came in contact with disciples of the Greek philosophy; in particular, of the Stoic system, of which Tarsus was a flourishing seat. The occasional use of Stoic phraseology and maxims, in a new and higher application, in his

writings, is certainly remarkable, and may be owing to opportunities of personal intercourse with Stoic teachers which he then enjoyed. His coincidences, extending even to forms of expression, with Seneca, are much more reasonably ascribed to that sort of acquaintance with Stoic doctrine than to a personal acquaintance of the two men; a supposition which has little evidence in its favor. But what is the proof that he was possessed of the erudition that is sometimes attributed to him? A passage that occurs in the poet Aratus, who happens to have been a native of Tarsus, to the effect that we are the offspring of God (Acts xvii. 28); and a hexameter line, which occurs in Epimenides, on the bad qualities of the Cretans (Tit. i. 12). But these sayings, it is likely, were scraps in general circulation, and no more indicate a familiarity with Greek authors than the repetition of the words, "an honest man is the noblest work of God," with the accompanying remark, that it is an utterance of some of the English poets, proves a man to be conversant with English literature. There is no indication in Paul's writings, and no proof from any quarter, that he had read Æschylus or Homer, Plato or Demosthenes, or any other classic writer of heathen antiquity. Had he studied either of these aŭthors, it is hardly possible that distinct traces of this fact should be missing from his writings. The style, as well as the contents, of his letters, would exhibit signs of a culture so diverse from that which the rabbis afforded. The "much learning" which, as Festus thought, had made Paul mad, was converse with Jewish, not Gentile books; and of this matter Festus was a poor judge, learning being a source

of insanity to which he had probably taken care not to expose himself. Perhaps the impression to which we refer in respect to Paul's Gentile learning may have sprung from a natural wish of some minds to have one among the apostles who could lay claim to this distinction. It reminds one of the lavish praise that it was once the custom of preachers to bestow on the scientific acquirements of the first man; as when Robert South says that Aristotle was but the rubbish of Adam, and Athens the ruins of Paradise. But Paul is indebted for his eminence to sources of power far higher than literature and science can confer. It was impossible that all vestiges of his rabbinical training should be cast aside; but they serve as a foil to set off more impressively the native vigor of his mind. If he did not devote himself to the study of the heathen authors, he fully comprehended heathenism as a religious phenomenon. The religious aspiration that lies at the root of heathen worship is pointed out in the discourse at Athens. The origin of idolatry is revealed in the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The responsibility of those who have not been taught by a written revelation is proved by referring to the testimony of their own consciences and the law written on the heart. How was the declaration of the Saviour, that "salvation is of the Jews," verified afresh when this "Hebrew of the Hebrews" stood on Mars' Hill, and proclaimed to an audience of Athenians Jesus and the resurrection!

Among the qualifications of Paul for his peculiar work as a propagator of the gospel and a founder of churches, the singular blending of enthusiasm with

prudence in his nature deserves attention. There was a fire which no difficulties that stood in his path could quench; but along with it there was a moderation, the temperance or sobriety, which kept him back from all extravagance. He unites a zeal, which one would think would brook no restraint, with a wonderful tact and shrewdness. A certain sagacity, or good sense, presides over his conduct. His burning zeal never runs into fanaticism. At the right time, he knows how to consult expediency. When we find these apparently incongruous qualities combined in the champion of any cause, we may look out for great results. These traits mingle in the character of a statesman like Cromwell, and in the founders of some of the great religious orders in the Catholic Church. The history of Paul contains many examples of the opportune exercise of this prudence and tact. He would not yield an inch to the demand of the Judaizers when the principle was at stake, even though Peter was seduced to give them his tacit support; but he rebuked this leading apostle in pointed terms. Yet he would go very far in making concessions to remove the misunderstanding and prejudice of the Jews, and to pacify Jewish feeling that was offended by his apparently radical proceedings. Before the Sanhedrim he contrived, by avowing himself a believer in one of the doctrines of the Pharisees, to kindle a strife between the two schools of doctors, in the smoke of which he effected his escape. He was not afraid of the face of man: he did not tremble before the furious mob at Jerusalem, and he stood before Nero without quailing. But he was not the man to throw away his life; and he did not think it undignified to be let

down in a basket from the wall of Damascus. He had no heroic moods that moved him to fling away a reasonable caution. His courtesy to heathen magistrates, even bad men, is in marked contrast with the temper of a fanatic. A refinement and delicacy of sentiment are never wanting. He considers it a superstition to refuse to eat the meat of animals that have been killed at the altars of Jupiter, Diana, or Neptune; but he would drive nobody into doing what he felt to be wrong, however unfounded his scruples might be. He would not, like a fanatic, insist on the outward act before the conviction was ripe for it. In a kind of chivalry of tenderness, as one has called it, he would himself abstain from eating such meat, if his example was to mislead a weak and superstitious brother into the doing of a right thing against his conscience. The practical wisdom, or sobriety, of Paul, is illustrated on a point where an ignorant criticism has often condemned or sneered at him, — in what he says of the dress and deportment of Christian women. He paid a proper respect to the ancient ideas of decorum, not wishing unnecessarily to stir up a prejudice where there was already hostility enough against the infant churches. Paul is censured for the very things that prevented the churches from being broken up by tumults within, and by enmity and suspicion without. He knew just where to draw the line between a Christian independence and a reckless fanaticism. He would do more than excite a commotion: he would organize and build on enduring foundations. I wish that all zealots for social reforms would spend the time which they devote to supercilious criticism upon Paul to the hum-

ble study of his life. Let me observe here, that no man has given a higher honor to woman, or set a higher dignity and sacredness upon marriage, than the apostle who makes it the symbol of the union of Christ with his Church.

The sympathy of Paul with his fellow-disciples, with his countrymen, and with all men, "Greeks and Barbarians," made self-sacrifice the habit of his life. He clasped the little churches as children in his arms. In his communications to them, he poured out his tender solicitude and more than paternal affection. All that he is, all that he experienced, is for them. Whether he is afflicted or consoled, it is a divine appointment for their benefit. Any form of spiritual good that he may possess is not for himself, but has been given that it might be imparted again to them. A beautiful instance of this identification of himself with his brethren is found in the passage (2 Cor. i. 4) in which he speaks with gratitude of the comfort which he had received from God, "who comforteth us in all our tribulation, *that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God.*" So deep is his sympathy for his kinsmen of the race of Israel, that he would himself willingly be cut off and cursed for their sake! A power in itself, the self-denying love of the apostle called out all his energies, and kept them directed to a single end.

The absorbing religious consecration of Paul is the leading feature in his character. His earnest, strenuous devotion to the work to which he had been called by the Master had no intermission, and knew no rest. It must not be forgotten that we have in

the book of Acts a sketch of only a fragment of Paul's missionary career, which covered, in all, a period of thirty years. In the reference that he incidentally makes to the perils, indignities, and hardships to which he had been subject, — how he had been scourged and stoned; had fallen among robbers; been exposed to the plots of hostile Jews and treacherous disciples, to hunger and cold; burdened with the care of churches only just converted from paganism, — he mentions that thrice he had experienced shipwreck. This was written before the occurrence of the shipwreck on the shore of Malta, which is described by Luke. There is a vast, unrecorded history of toil, anxiety, persecution, casualty; chapters of biography irrecoverably lost, but all the more pathetic for the veil that hangs over them. His life was one long campaign. So he felt himself at the close. He could look back and say that he had fought a good fight. It is interesting to notice that the great idea of righteousness, the one idea that had engaged his thoughts from childhood, was still before his mind: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me."

I must gather up, in the briefest compass, a few of the lessons for our time, and for all time, which are drawn from the glimpses we have taken of the character and career of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

He is an eloquent witness to the supremacy that belongs to religion, in Christian teaching, as in the lives of men. The inculcation of justice and charity among men is never to be neglected; but the life of

ethics is in religion. The recovery of men to God is the prime end of the gospel. The preaching of Paul was a beseeching of men, in the name of Christ, to be reconciled to God.

In all Christian ages, Paul is a witness against ritualism, — if by ritualism is meant a dependence upon external rites and an earthly priesthood. Imagine a ritualist of this description thanking God that he had baptized only Caius and Crispus and a few other individuals, as Paul says of the Church at Corinth, with which he stood in such intimate relations! At the Reformation, it was the voice of Paul that called men away from human mediators to Christ, and broke up the reign of the mediæval system of religion. As long as the Epistle to the Galatians remains, it will be impossible for Judaizing Christianity permanently to triumph in the Church.

How is Christ exalted when we look at the greatness of Paul and the greatness of his influence! Luther said that the spiritual miracles were the greatest. Paul, in all that constitutes the excellence of his character and influence, was, as he himself felt in his inmost soul, only one effect of Christ. The splendor of the planet is not its own, but is derived from the sun round which it revolves. In this dependent relation Paul consciously stood to Christ. When we contemplate such a disciple, are not the power and rank of the Master felt to be altogether unique? Is there not some other, transcendent distinction between Paul and Christ besides that of the degree of moral excellence that belonged to them

respectively? The love of Christ to him was the one great consolation and joy, from which no event, and no power, human or superhuman, could separate him. There is something in the bare relation of this disciple to his Lord, apart from all specific declarations, which impresses us with the conviction that Christ, in the apostle's view, was more than a morally perfect man. He stands forth as the divine author of a new spiritual creation.

The best fruit that we can gather from a view of the life of Paul is a rebuke for the languid spirit that belongs to our service of the Master, and a spur to a more unselfish, earnest, courageous performance of whatever work he has given us to do. The most effectual defence of the Christian cause is not reasoning, which ingenious men may contrive to parry, but the irresistible argument of a holy life, before which infidelity stands abashed.

VIII.

CRITICISM CONFIRMATORY OF THE GOSPELS.

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MODERN biblical criticism is a product of Protestantism. The private judgment, liberated from bondage to tradition, could hardly fail in the end to challenge the authority of the Scriptures themselves.

Their authority, to be sure, was not one of the points in dispute between the reformers and the Papal Church: on the contrary, both parties acknowledged the control of the Bible in matters of faith; and it was merely the identification of tradition with the word of God against which the protest was made. It is true, that, even at the outset of the Protestant movement, individuals — and foremost among them was Luther himself — were disposed to abate a little the canonical credit of here and there an inspired book: but these criticisms were made to rest on doctrinal grounds, rather than historic; and for generations the Protestant mind was too much occupied with adjusting and defending the details of the faith to pursue the subject.

But, the periods of controversy and of consolidation being over, Protestantism was confronted with the

inquiry, How, in consistency, can the canon of Scripture be accepted, while the authority of tradition is repudiated? That canon has been collected and transmitted by the Church; and, if the dicta of the Church may be disputed in reference to the details of faith, why not also in reference to the foundation of faith? Can the books admitted as the source and repository of Christian doctrine make good their claim to this pre-eminence? Disregarding for the time the voice of tradition in their favor, — and no consistent Protestant can refuse permission to disregard it, — have we historic warrant for receiving them with all their miraculous contents as authentic and harmonious records?

The discussion of this question was opened by the assaults upon revealed religion made by the Deists, particularly in England, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and, about the middle of the latter century, the "Credibility of the Gospel History" was ably defended upon historic grounds by Lardner. A little later, the same discussion enlisted the scholars of Germany; and Semler, by maintaining that Jesus and the apostles *accommodated* themselves to Jewish opinions, by acknowledging a *mythical* element in the Scriptures, and by attributing the origin of certain of the Epistles to a desire to *mediate* between contending parties in the early Church, anticipated in principle the course of subsequent discussion quite down to the present day.

It is usual to date the rise of modern criticism from Semler and the middle of the last century; although the criticism which claims to be pre-eminently "historic" is of more recent origin. From the outset, it has

been the miraculous element in biblical history to which exception has principally been taken. During the latter part of the last century, and the first two or three decades of this, it was the practice to get rid of this troublesome element by some process of interpretation. These marvels, it was said, are not to be regarded as essential to the narrative, but rather as its Oriental costume: they are mere embellishments, and must be stripped off if we would get at the naked truth of the biblical statements. But the growth of modern philology put an end to this exegetical violence, and compelled scepticism to resort to new weapons. Here and there, indeed, an interpreter had already found a pretext for taking liberties with parts of the narrative, even of the first Gospel and the fourth, in the assumption that Matthew and John could hardly have been eye-witnesses of the particular incident under consideration; and one or two scholars of note had already ventured to question the genuineness of individual Gospels, when, in 1835, a man came forward who broke completely with the received opinion respecting their origin. Strauss's "Life of Jesus" then made its appearance in its first form. In this book, Strauss undertook to substitute, in place of the supernatural view of the Gospels on the one hand, and of the naturalistic view on the other hand (both of which he pronounced to be antiquated), another explanation of them; viz., the mythical. According to him, not only has orthodoxy been wrong in claiming that they contain miraculous history, but rationalism itself has made a mistake in denying the miracles, yet affirming the history; for, correctly understood, they contain neither miracles

nor history, but the unconscious substitution of opinions for facts. Just as, in the fabulous accounts given us of the origin of the various pagan faiths, we have religious ideas presented in a concrete or historical form, which form we rend that we may get at the kernel of truth it envelops; so is it with the Gospels. Jesus of Nazareth, an extraordinary man, is mistaken by his countrymen for the expected Messiah. Their admiring veneration attaches to him all the characteristics composing the prevalent idea of that exalted personage. This is evident from the correspondence existing between the traits of their portrait of him and the ideal prefigured in the Old Testament. It is this ideal, therefore, which combines with a personal admiration for Jesus, and originates, in the lapse of a century or so, our extant evangelic records. These records are not histories; they are not fictions: they are, rather, a dramatic presentation of truths. Call them historic, if you will: they exhibit a true history of thought, not a pretended history of fact. They consist of religious ideas that have crystallized about a veritable personage. Underneath all, lies, indeed, a substantial basis of fact; but just how much is real, and how much ideal, is a question which early faith did not ask, and which modern criticism can hardly answer.

The hypothesis of Strauss, which summed up or superseded nearly all preceding sceptical opinions, was soon supplemented by the speculations of a school of theologians receiving name from the University of Tübingen, and having as their leader the late Prof. Baur of that place, who died in 1860. Strauss had occupied himself mainly with the contents of the

Gospels, and had assigned their composition to the middle of the second century, and even later; the received opinions respecting their date being assumed to have originated from the spurious titles of the books themselves. Baur urges, that, to judge correctly of their contents, we must understand their origin. The credibility of the records depends on the aims of the authors. These aims we can gather only by considering the characteristics of the books in connection with the circumstances under which they were composed. The plainest disclosure of these circumstances Baur finds, as he thinks, in the Epistle to the Galatians, — one of the four Epistles accepted by him as genuine. From the account which Paul gives there of his conference with the apostles at Jerusalem, it is evident to Baur that the early believers were divided into two antagonistic parties, — Pauline Christians, who, under the leadership of the Apostle to the Gentiles, maintained that the privileges of the new faith were open to heathens and to Jews without discrimination; and Petrine, or Judaizing Christians, who wished to attach to the new doctrine a portion of the ritualism inherited from their fathers. The contest between these parties went on till the middle of the second century, when the Judaizing faction were constrained to seek alliance with their opponents; and from this alliance sprang catholic Christianity.

Now, the larger part of the New Testament, the Gospels included, originated, as Baur supposes, during this period of compromise and conciliation. Our present Gospel of Matthew is an imperfectly-disguised reconstruction of an earlier Judaistic Gospel; Luke's,

on the other hand, is a conciliatory modification of a Gospel of the Pauline type; Mark's, again, originated when the spirit of concession and neutrality had degenerated into insipidity; and the Gospel of John, composed about the year 160, is a dogmatic treatise in the garb of history, — a dexterous combination of incident and discourse into an ideal drama, of which the prologue furnishes the programme. In fact, it was the fourth Gospel, which, he says,[1] gave him a clew to the structure of the rest; and the tendency, the determinate purpose, discoverable in that, warrant us in ascribing corresponding aims to the other three, beginning with Luke's.

In the endeavor to establish his theory, Baur takes a complete survey of early Christian literature, both canonical and uncanonical: and his followers claim, that now for the first time have our evangelic records received their true historical setting; now, at length, has the process by which received Christianity was developed been correctly traced. The labors of preceding critics, from Semler to Strauss, have been abstract, negative, destructive; but, in the results arrived at by Baur and the Tübingen school, we have something positive, constructive, historic, — conclusions which, being reached, not by speculation, but by research, will stand. It must be confessed, that, during the quarter of a century which has well-nigh elapsed since Baur perfected his theory, criticism has made no attempt to solve the problem which the origin of Christianity presents that has not been largely indebted to him; unless we except the hypothesis of Renan, who supposes that the Gospels are neither the

[1] *Kritische Untersuchungen*, p. iv.

productions of pious enthusiasts nor of reconciled partisans, but a mixture of legend and fact.

Here we have, then, the chief positions which hostile criticism has taken respecting the Gospels. Into a detailed examination of the arguments advanced in defence of these positions, I do not propose to enter. I invite you, rather, to notice that criticism has all this time been ministering to faith. In and through these hostile discussions, the opinion of believers has been receiving confirmation. Indirectly, yet evidently, has this critical process been preparing the way for the assured recognition of the Gospels in their integrity as authentic records.

I. — CRITICISM HAS BEEN TRIBUTARY TO FAITH IN THE GOSPELS THROUGH ITS METHODS OF INTERPRETATION.

It was natural, that, when men became sensible of an incompatibility between their philosophical notions and the sacred records, attempts should be made to reconcile the two by subjecting the records to some kind of forced explanation. Rationalism, and a disbelief in or a disregard of the exactness of language, generally go together. Hence expository curtailments and additions, distortions and perversions, of various sorts, found origin and reception. The vagaries which, half a century or more ago, sceptical scholarship advanced in the name of exegesis, provoke the derision of the humblest biblical student at the present day. We listen to such interpreters as Paulus when they tell us that the magi with their coffers were merely Jewish peddlers; that the star which came and stood over the young child was a comet or

a passing meteor; that the salutation of the angel was a joyous thought; that the vision of Zacharias was a flash of hallucination, his dumbness a stroke of paralysis; the glory of the Lord shining around the shepherds the rays of a lantern carried by a man just coming over the ridge of the mountain; and so on to the end of the record:—when we read such pretended expositions as these, we hardly know which to wonder at most, — the ingenuity of the sacred writer in concealing his thought, or of the interpreter in discovering it. And how, pray, did the discoverer get the clew to his discovery? and has he alone liberty to exercise his wits in this way? And what shall we say to a rival interpretation which has even more ingenuity to recommend it? Say!—just what believer and sceptic now unite in declaring, — that such interpretations affront a reader's understanding; that a man who gives to such stuff the title of a "commentary" on the Gospels, may be supposed, as charitably as plausibly, to be the victim of a false etymology, and to understand by a commentary a tissue of inventions. No wonder that even secular scholarship raised a protest against such interpreters in the name of the outraged rights of speech; no wonder that an exegete who betrays now an inclination to take such liberties with an evangelist is at once marked as a man who holds his unbelief in higher esteem than he does his good name as a scholar: for Christendom, without distinction of creed, acknowledges the correctness with which Hermann characterized such interpreters when he said, "that, to get rid of the evangelical miracles, they invented exegetical miracles."

But such lucubrations have come to be numbered among the curiosities of biblical literature. Allusion is made to them, chiefly because they mark a position which rationalism saw fit to take, and has been forced to quit. But they seem never to have found more than an exceptional and halting acceptance this side of the water. Among us those forms of sceptical interpretation have met with more favor, which involve the assumption that the aim of Christianity is merely to illustrate and enforce "the religion of reason." Such notions as that Jesus pre-existed are irrational. Such doctrines as human depravity, the atonement, the eternity of future retribution, are degrading to man, and derogatory to God. They may be rejected, therefore, at once, as unbiblical. It is true, that, in excluding all traces of them from the Gospels, the text may have to be forced a little; but better to strain a point in interpretation than to admit what is superstitious or opposed to right reason.

The day, however, for paltering and prevarication in dealing with the Bible, has passed by. A full recognition and unflinching application of the laws of language is at length exacted even of the biblical interpreter. It is acknowledged to be his duty, not to read his own opinions into the sacred text, but to educe the author's meaning from it; to assume that the writer has said what he means, and means what he says; to add nothing; to abate nothing; to distort nothing; but to reproduce, so far as honest, patient toil will enable him to do so, the precise thought that lay in the writer's mind. The exegetical reform which philology thus constrained rationalism to adopt has already produced beneficial results. It has been

the death of half-belief. It has put a stop to the long succession of compromises and concessions. It has dissipated a multitude of subterfuges and equivocations. Few defenders of the faith now seek to accomplish their purpose by diminishing the number or the significance of miracles. Few professed believers now dole out their credence according to a graduated standard, — conceding to Jesus sway over man, but denying his dominion over Nature. Few condescend to prop up their faltering faith by the assumption of magnetic influences, accelerated natural processes, and the like. The race of balancing believers is becoming extinct; for exegesis leaves no middle ground to stand upon. It excludes in this matter an intermediate state. It says to every man, "This is the story; there is no ambiguity about it: these are the doctrines; there is no equivocation concerning them. Accept, if you please; reject, if you please: but do not stultify yourself by attempting both to accept and to reject at once."

The positive position, which, in obedience to this demand, students of the Gospels have already very generally felt themselves compelled to take in reference to matters of fact, men of clear thought and frank speech confess must be taken also in reference to matters of faith. Among such men, Strauss is conceded, alike by friend and foe, to stand; and his admissions on this point, therefore, are as noteworthy as they may be supposed to be impartial. Thirty-six years ago, he asserted the essence of the Christian faith to be quite independent of his criticism, — "The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever

doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts;" and he appended to his work a dissertation designed to show "that the doctrinal significance of the life of Jesus remained inviolate." Now, however, — to restrict ourselves to a couple of statements, — he declares that "a Christ, who, without being conscious that he is the God-Man in the strict sense, had called himself the 'Light of the world,' would have been a braggart. Whoever calls him so without holding him to be the personage just described is a flatterer, or, in case he has less regard in so doing to Christ than to third persons, a hypocrite;"[2] And again: "The only genuine and honest meaning of the term 'Redeemer' is that in which it designates the God-Man sacrificing himself for the sins of the world. The expression is derived from the notion of expiatory sacrifice: to use it in any other sense is a deceptive game of words, — a game of which I myself was once guilty, but which, on clearer insight, I long ago abandoned."[3] Similar admissions to this, even if not made so explicitly, may be expected, as the more exact exposition of the doctrinal contents of the Gospels reveals the fact, that opinions still cherished by many are not compatible with the plain tenor of the sacred text.

II. — CRITICISM HAS BEEN MINISTERING TO FAITH IN THE GOSPELS BY RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIANITY AS AN HISTORICAL PROBLEM.

With this recognition, discussions about the Gospels advanced to a new stage. Previously, discussion had been, to a great extent, speculative and dogmatic. The

[2] *Der Christus des Glaubens, etc.*, p. 214 seq.
[3] *Die Halben u. die Ganzen*, pp. 47, 49.

relations of the first three Gospels, in particular, had been explained by every species of far-fetched conjecture. Primitive gospels and Aramaic gospels and lost gospels, oral gospels and written gospels, were talked of in such confident ignorance, that at length the whole inquiry was lost in inextricable confusion. The hypotheses advanced it was alike impossible to prove, to refute, or to believe. The monstrous theory of Eichhorn, according to which our present synoptical Gospels sum up a series of twelve, serves as a monument of the guesswork which passed itself off as criticism. The treatment to which the books themselves were subjected, resembled that inflicted, as we have seen, on their contents. To a generation bewildered with such speculations, the proposal to deal with Christianity as with any other historical phenomenon, and to account for it and its documents by the definite and intelligible laws of historical research, was like a celestial observation to the "mariner tossed in thick weather on an unknown sea."

There are believers, it is true, who shrink from the application of the historical method to the records and facts of Christianity; some who go so far as to disparage the historical argument in its support, as inadequate, and even irrelevant. But the fear is unfounded, the disparagement undeserved; and both will be unavailing. The fundamental question, in which advocate and opponent are alike interested, is simply, whether Christianity is a fact of history. It is contained in certain documents: are those documents authentic records? It claims to have originated in a certain age and country: how does it appear when viewed in its connections of time and place? Is

it a supernatural fact? or is it the necessary result of merely natural causes? These fundamental questions can receive an unequivocal answer only after complete and impartial investigation. The attempt, in advance of such investigation, to satisfy an inquirer with internal probabilities, or with ethical excellences, is a logical anticipation which often amounts to a begging of the question.

And, in prosecuting such investigation, we need not allow ourselves to be intimidated by flings at the ignorance, the credulity, the childishness, of the early Christian writers. About such things not a little extravagance has been uttered in these latter days. We must remember that the science of history is of recent date; that the Fathers, like all other writers, ought to be judged according to the standard of their age. And when the attempt is made to invalidate, for instance, the testimony of Eusebius, by reminding us that he recounts[4] without apparent misgiving the fictitious story of the correspondence between Jesus and the Prince of Edessa; when the statements of Clement are dismissed as of little account, because he tells in good faith the fable of the phœnix;[5] when Irenæus is ridiculed because he attempts to prove from the four regions of the world, the four cardinal winds, the four faces of the cherubim, and the like, that the number of the Gospels could not be greater or less than four,[6] — we may well inquire whether such treatment is fair. Is there any reason why these writers should be tried by the standard of the nineteenth century, rather than of the first, the second, or the

[4] H. E., b. i. chap. 13. [5] Clem., 1 Ep. ad Cor., § xxv.
[6] Cf., for example, Schenkel's Character of Jesus portrayed, vol. i. pp. 230 seq.

third? If Clement's belief in the phœnix is to destroy our faith in him, why not pronounce his contemporary, Tacitus, a dealer in old wives' fables for the same reason?[7] And shall Irenæus's puerile explanation of a fact recoil to the overthrow of the fact? Nay, not less surely does the explanation attest the pre-existence of the fact explained than the inadequacy of the explanation proves that the fact rests on altogether different grounds.

Nor is it to be forgotten that the inquiry relates to *religious* history. The facts are also truths; were prized and transmitted because of their spiritual significance. Accordingly, the records of them must be read and tested from this point of view. Critic and apologist alike err when they assume that the evangelists' aim is purely, or even principally, historic, — to narrate events in their sequence in a "purely objective" way. Indeed, there are those who declare that even the secular historian should be governed avowedly by a didactic aim. But, however that may be, the sacred historians, as we are wont in popular phrase to call them, expressly tell us[8] that they wrote to produce and confirm religious faith; and the obvious characteristics of the Gospels — their fragmentariness, their unchronological arrangement, the indifference exhibited to matters of merely historic interest — confirm the declaration. In fact, a different view of them is at variance with their probable origin in the preaching of the first ministers of the Word, and isolates them also from the body of the New-Testament writings, the aim of which is confessedly spiritual. Hence, in making up our final decision re-

[7] See Ann., vi. 28.

[8] John xx. 31; Luke i. 4.

specting the Gospels, justice requires that they should be tried according to their claims. Their presentation of facts must be connected, in our judgment, with the religious aims for which, as the writers tell us, the presentation was made. Thus the internal considerations supplement the external; the religious statements illumine and re-enforce the historic. It is the distinction of Christianity, both as a whole and in its parts, both as respects its events and its records, that it unites history and character, fact and doctrine, letter and spirit, God and man, in harmonious consistency; and it is nothing but one-sidedness on our part which attempts to put asunder what God has thus joined together.

It was this one-sidedness which vitiated Strauss's book as a solution of the historic problem. Over and above the unsatisfactoriness of that solution, — on the score that it was essentially negative, or, as he himself described it, "extinguished false lights, and left others to acquire, if they might, the power of discerning something through the darkness," — the application of the theory of myths to explain what is miraculous in the evangelic records was, logically speaking, as really an assumption as any of the theories of vulgar rationalism which the author undertook to supersede. A criticism of the contents of the books was not in order. The books themselves, as historical phenomena, ought first to have been considered. Especially imperative was this preliminary discussion upon Strauss, as he found it necessary to add half a century or more to the received date of the origin of the books in order to get time for the growth of his myths. Without this antecedent demonstration of

the historic connections of Christianity, his readers could have no logical assurance that his theory was not a sheer speculation. The most sympathizing and predisposed mind could not but confess that the theory might, after all, prove to be — what the progress of criticism is proving it to be — itself the grandest of myths, a substitution of opinion for fact.

It is Baur's distinction, that he sought to correct this mistake. His reiterated profession of assuming a purely historical position, and attempting to comprehend merely what is historically given, excites expectations which are, nevertheless, doomed to disappointment: for it soon appears that he comes to the study of history with certain prepossessions respecting what it must contain; or rather with the rooted assumption, that it cannot, in any event, contain a miracle. History, according to him, is pure development; and by development he means absolute continuity, excluding any thing like creative intervention.[9] He is thus, in principle, radically antagonistic to Christianity. His theory of history precommits him before the investigation. The case is decided by him before trial, and the verdict made up before the hearing. The boasted historical criticism turns out to be as really dogmatic as any that has preceded it. History becomes, under its treatment, little more than concrete philosophy; Paulinism and Judaism are the *Seyn* and *Nichtseyn* of an Hegelian antithesis.

Baur had pronounced Strauss's work defective because it undertakes to give a criticism of the gospel history without a criticism of the Gospels. Strauss, in

[9] Cf. *Kirchengesch. der drei ersten Jahr.*, 3d ed. 1863, i. p. 1 seq.

turn, charges[10] Baur with idealizing facts, and clothing them in the forms of modern speculation. Of Strauss's "Life of Jesus," Renan again declares,[11] that "it is, at bottom, merely the philosophy of Hegel applied to the evangelic narratives." It is this philosophic precommitment which effectually disqualifies Baur, Strauss, Renan, and the rest, for impartial historic inquiry.

In vain do their followers allege, in defence, that this prejudgment against Christianity is offset by the prejudices of its friends in its favor; for these prejudices do not bring its friends to the investigation, resolved to find miracles, whether any are recorded or not. There is no process of invention on their part as a counterpoise to the process of destruction carried on by their adversaries. Moreover, an antecedent bias with respect to Christianity, which its advocates are free to confess, is avowed now by its opponents also. Speaking of the assurances given us so often by sceptical theologians, that "their investigations are prompted solely by an historic interest," Strauss has recently said,[12] "With all deference to the words of the learned gentlemen, I hold what they assure us of to be an impossibility; and should esteem it to be nothing praiseworthy, even were it possible. A man who is writing about the rulers of Nineveh or the Egyptian Pharaohs may, indeed, have a purely historic interest in the work; but Christianity is such a living power, and the question as to its origin involves such far-reaching consequences for the immediate present, that the inquirer

[10] E.g., *Leben Jesu*, 1864, p. 108.
[11] *Studies, etc.*, translated by Frothingham, p. 184.
[12] *Leben Jesu*, 1864, p. xiii. seq.

must be a dolt to have merely an historic interest in the decision of such a question." As respects a previous bias, therefore, friend and foe are confessedly alike. But what we charge upon these self-styled historic critics is, that they superadd to their preliminary bias allegiance to a dogma which inevitably precommits research to a foregone conclusion: for they all concur in maintaining that it is "the task of history to resolve what is miraculous into what is natural;" [13] that "history ends where miracles begin;" [14] that "no supernatural account can be admitted, for either credulity or deception is at the bottom of it;" [15] that "the recognition of the impossibility of a miracle is the first condition for every historical discussion of the evangelic history." [16] Such assertions, which might be multiplied from their writings indefinitely, warrant us in refusing to acknowledge their vaunted historic criticism to be worthy of the name. Genuine science is always open to conviction; never comes to its investigations resolved to deny or to transform well-attested facts if they do not square with its preformed opinions. Even M. Littré, the pupil of Comte, and French translator of Strauss, has said, "That man is unfitted for historic investigation who would have any fact other than it is." In the spirit of this declaration, may not the self-styled historical criticism be impeached in the name of historical science?

And the conclusions which the Tübingen criticism has reached are as improbable as its guiding principle

[13] Baur, *Kirchengesch.*, i. p. 1. [14] Cf. Strauss, *Leben Jesu*, 1864, p. 146 seq.
[15] Renan's *Studies, etc.*, Frothingham's trans., p. 221.
[16] Zeller, *Strauss and Renan, an Essay, etc.*, Lond. 1866, p. 91.

is unscientific. To tell us that Christianity is the gradual and unaided development of Judaism, that the all-embracing religion which has revolutionized the world is the product of Jewish exclusiveness and heathen culture, is to provoke inquiry rather than to satisfy it; for it represents that which has been the origin of a new type of society — new politics, literature, art, morals, life — as having been itself virtually without beginning, a dawn growing brighter and brighter to the perfect day, and all without a sun. It is not surprising, then, that investigation should have been so attracted to this problem as to give rise to a new province of theological study, — the history of New-Testament times. In such study, the friends of Christianity may see another augury of the triumph of the truth; for, the more thoroughly the relics of contemporary Jewish and Pagan thought are scrutinized, the more thorough will be the conviction that Christianity contains what transcends them all. Whatever points of contact it may be shown to have had with antecedent systems, those systems will not be proved to be the perennial sources of the river of the water of life. The researches of these investigators will turn out to be but a comment on the inspired statement, "when the fulness of the time was come." The more clearly the preparative process is traced out, the more sure will be the conviction, that, after all, it was only preparative; that the laws of human thought and life demand inexorably an additional statement, even that which is given in the full-freighted words of the apostle, "God sent his Son," — one who was no culmination of Essenism, Phariseeism, Platonism, Stoicism, no mere compound of

Hebraism and Hellenism, but who needed not that any man teach him. Inquiries begun for the ascertainment of fact will end, as they have ended, in the establishment of faith. Guizot has recently stated that his studies for the annotation of Gibbon "impressed him not only with the moral and social grandeur of Christianity, but with the difficulty of explaining it by purely human forces and causes."[17] Thus miracles, so far from being discarded as at variance with history, come to be defended, rather, in the interests of history; because, otherwise, certain indubitable facts of history cannot be satisfactorily explained.

Nor is the Tübingen theory any more satisfactory when considered as a solution of the literary problem which the origin of Christianity presents. Of the twenty-seven writings composing our New Testament, only five, we are told, were written by apostles; of the associates and first adherents of Jesus, — men whose zeal and eloquence and organizing skill planted churches in three continents, — only two made use of the pen; while from wholly unknown men of the second century we have a series of masterly productions. Now, why this unheard-of breach between great writings and great men? and where are the men in the second century to whom these writings can be plausibly ascribed? We are sent in search of a score of Juniuses, and that not to an age where we meet with candidates by the score, but to a period in which, with all our searching, we can find hardly the shadow of a mighty name.

[17] *Revue des Deux Mondes* for Sept. 1, 1869, p. 30; cf. Lenormant's similar testimony, *De la Divinité du Christianisme, etc*, p. v. seq.

And how explain the moral incongruity between the writings and their authors? If these books are the productions of a "genial set of Jesuitical religionists" in furtherance of a union between contending parties, how happens it that one and all breathe so direct, exalted, uncompromising a morality? Can we believe that the author of the Gospel of John, with all its simplicity, purity, sublimity, was a man who tried to palm off his book as the production of the apostle, and tried to accomplish this dishonest purpose, not by a straightforward lie, but by the contemptible device of a series of hints and indirect suggestions, deluding the reader, but not unequivocally compromising himself?[18]

And by what magical arts did these anonymous plotters succeed in getting at once a reception for their works among all the little scattered communities of believers? and not a reception merely, but a reception as original productions of the apostolic age, — productions which it was an acknowledged mark of orthodoxy to reverence? And if the early believers were such an uncritical, credulous, compromising race as these critics would have us believe, and the number of pseudonymous writings was "infinite,"[19] how came these uncritical readers to select their canon with such marvellous and consentient skill? — a skill that commends itself to the critics themselves. But we cannot pause to state all the difficulties that start. Such critics make more work than they perform. Instead of a solution of the question proposed, what

[18] Cf. Baur, *die kanonischen Evangelien*, pp. 378 seq.; *Kirchengesch.*, i. 147.

[19] Cf., e.g., Mackay, *Tübingen School*, p. 335. But Irenæus's real words are *ἀμύθητον πλῆθος inenarrabilis multitudo*, adv. Her., i. 13, 1; Harvey's ed., p. 177.

do they return us but a batch of problems? — problems all the product of their theory, and consequently furnishing just so many presumptions against its truth.

III. — SERVICE HAS BEEN RENDERED TO THE CAUSE OF FAITH BY THE CONCLUSIONS WHICH INTERNAL CRITICISM HAS REACHED RESPECTING PARTICULAR GOSPELS.

Two or three specifications in illustration of this statement are all for which room can here be found.

1. The mutual relations of the first three Gospels have long furnished a perplexing problem to biblical students. There is an obvious agreement among the three as respects materials, arrangement, language even; yet, on the other hand, as noticeable a difference in all these respects. The conjectures framed to account for this unparalleled combination of agreements and differences have generally assumed, until recently, that Mark's Gospel was largely derived from one or both of the other two. This assumption, which is as old at least as Augustine, who speaks of Mark as a servile abridgment of Matthew,[20] fell in with the theory of the Tübingen theologians, who, it will be remembered, regard Matthew's as a modified Jewish Gospel, and Luke's as a conciliatory Pauline Gospel. Since no traces of a partisan spirit, either Pauline or Jewish, are discernible in Mark, they were content to say, in terms which seem to the uninitiated to approximate closely to a Celtic witticism, that its doctrinal tendency consisted in its neutrality. Baur even discovers a confirmation of

[20] *Tanquam pedissequus et breviator ejus videtur*, de Cons. Evang., lib. i. cap. 2; Migne, p. 1044.

his opinion in its author's choice of the name of Mark, the "interpreter" of Peter, and attendant of Paul!

Of late, however, the first three Gospels have been subjected to a process of microscopic scrutiny and comparison, in which hardly a word has failed to be taken into account; and, as a result, critics have generally abandoned the theory of the secondary and derivative character of Mark, and now acknowledge it to be a composition of co-ordinate rank with the other two. Indeed, an increasing number of them, among whom are several of very high repute for critical scholarship, are decided in the conclusion, that our second Gospel, so far from being an epitome of the other two, is, on the contrary, the earliest and most original of the three.

Now, without committing ourselves to any extreme opinion, we may notice that the establishment of the co-ordinate rank of Mark, the proof of what may be called his distinct evangelic personality, is of itself well-nigh fatal to the Tübingen theory; for the critics of this school are unable to point out any positive trace of a doctrinal purpose in the entire Gospel. The conflict between Paulinism and Judaism it is utterly ignorant of. The comparatively small proportion of its didactic contents is one of its marked peculiarities. It narrates, in a fresh, graphic, independent way, the marvellous acts of Jesus. Its aim is to picture them to the reader's eye, and thus elicit the confession, that the very works that Jesus did bear witness of him that the Father sent him. It does, indeed, present traits corroborative of the ancient and uniform tradition, that it embodies the preaching of Peter. But these acknowledged indications of its connection with

Peter only add significance to the fact, that doctrinally it knows neither Peter nor Paul, neither antagonism nor conciliation, — nothing but Jesus as historically proved to be the Son of God with power. It thus stands forth as an independent witness for the truth, — a witness which Baur's theory knows not what to do with. Its mere existence is decisive; for it is the one irreducible fact which is logically fatal to that theory.

2. Passing mention may be made, also, of the conclusion reached respecting the internal structure of the Gospel of John. Shortly after the first appearance of Strauss's book, attempts were made to revive the opinion that the Gospel is composite. Its precise and circumstantial narratives critics thought might be traceable to the apostle, while the discourses were attributable to a later hand. Baur made it the subject of one of his most characteristic essays; and, by an analysis of its structure, — which, with all its extravagances, is confessed to be masterly, — showed that it is woven throughout without seam, is unmistakably the product of a single mind; so that the critic must either accept it as it stands for the work of the beloved disciple, or attribute it as a whole to some other and far later writer. By shutting up the critic to this unequivocal alternative, Baur, guided by a higher wisdom than his own, has prepared the way for the decisive triumph of the accumulating evidence in favor of the Gospel's genuineness.

3. But the most memorable victory which internal criticism has yielded to the truth was the result of a controversy relative to the Gospel of Luke.

In the first half of the second century, there appeared at Rome a man, Marcion by name, who be-

came the leader of a sect of errorists that were called after him, and continued to propagate his views for many generations. Prominent among those views was the opinion, that the religion of the New Testament was antagonistic to that of the Old. To maintain this opinion, he asserted that the current Christianity of the churches was largely adulterated with Judaism; and it is interesting to notice, that, like Baur in modern times, he gave color to his assertion by greatly exaggerating the affair between Paul and Peter at Antioch, related in the Epistle to the Galatians. In order to rid Christianity of these Jewish corruptions, he revised the list of sacred books, and made for himself a canon which contained ten of Paul's Epistles curtailed, and a single Gospel. This Gospel, which bore no author's name in its superscription, is known to us moderns only by extracts from it, and descriptions given by Marcion's opponents. Two of these opponents, within about half a century after Marcion's death, undertook to refute his errors from his own Gospel; and the refutation of one of them, Tertullian,[21] has come down to us, together with a similar work by Epiphanius, a writer of a later date.

Now, according to the reiterated and harmonious testimony of these early writers, Marcion's Gospel was nothing but an alteration of our Gospel according to Luke. This, therefore, was the settled and accepted opinion down to the latter part of the last century. Then, however, Semler[22] broached the theory, that Marcion's Gospel and Luke's were two different revisions of one and the same original. This theory

[21] Who wrote A.D. 208. [22] In the year 1776.

was taken up by subsequent writers, and expanded into the opinion that Marcion's Gospel preceded Luke's, and was used by the evangelist in composing his work. The discussion was continued indecisively, till, in the year 1823, two theologians[23] published, in the same German town,[24] works prepared without concert, and vindicating the originality of Luke so emphatically, that critics holding the contrary view abandoned it.[25] But it began, before long, to find again a hesitating avowal here and there, and in due time was adopted and urged by Baur and his school. Some of his disciples, however, dissented; and one of them in particular[26] advocated the ancient opinion so ably as to settle the question.

In the course of this protracted controversy, the various scattered fragments of Marcion's Gospel were brought together; and, by a painstaking combination of fact and reasoning analogous to that by which the anatomist reconstructs an extinct animal, Marcion's Gospel was reproduced, and confronted with the canonical Luke. The correspondence between the two renders it evident at once that Luke's must have been an enlargement of Marcion's, or Marcion's an abridgment of Luke's; and thorough scrutiny dissipates all doubt that the latter statement is the truth.

The triumphant establishment of this conclusion involves consequences of much importance in relation to our Gospels. For in the first place, if the canonical Gospel preceded Marcion's, it must have been extant, current, at least as early as 125 A.D.[27] Sec-

[23] Olshausen and Hahn. [24] Königsberg.
[25] E.g., De Wette, Gieseler, et al. [26] Volckmar.
[27] Volckmar, p. 260, says A.D. 120; cf. p. 261.

ondly, it could hardly have been a gradual formation, or recast, as the Tübingen school allege, in a conciliatory spirit; for, had that been the case, how easy would it have been for the followers of Marcion to silence his opponents by retorting their charge, and exposing the facts! Again: in all probability, it was then acknowledged to have been written by Luke, a man of Gentile extraction, associated with the Apostle to the Gentiles; and doubtless found favor with Marcion on that account. Further: the proof of its genuineness gives rise to a strong presumption in favor of the genuineness of the remaining three; for, otherwise, how could they have established their claims to co-equal rank with it? Moreover, if the statements of early Christian writers turn out to be substantially true in a case like this, where their spirits are evidently heated by controversy, their cooler and more dispassionate statements, when concurrent, ought not to be lightly set aside. And, finally, the failure of this early errorist to reconstruct Christianity upon an anti-Judaistic basis in the second century augurs ill for the success of those who seem desirous of accomplishing a similar work in the nineteenth century: then it was necessary only to rewrite the sacred books, now to rewrite history besides.

It is not overlooked that the conclusion in this instance has been made to rest chiefly upon a process of internal criticism, — a species of criticism the precariousness of whose results has been often illustrated in the history of literature, both secular and sacred. But, in the present case, it is the re-affirmation of a result reached by successive as well as by simultaneous

and independent investigators; a result sustained by all extant ancient testimony bearing upon the point; a result resting upon grounds so convincing as to compel the assent of the Tübingen scholars,[28] who reopened the discussion; for they publicly retracted their opinion, and acknowledged Luke's priority: even Baur himself virtually abandoned his position.

IV. — CRITICAL RESEARCH HAS BEEN TRIBUTARY TO FAITH BY INCREASING THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOSPELS.

This increase consists chiefly in facts and documents that have come to light during the discussion. The most conspicuous and significant of them may here be mentioned.

And, rightly to appreciate them, we must remember that the two most recent sceptical hypotheses of note respecting our Gospels require the lapse of a considerable interval of time between the death of Jesus and the composition of the books as we now have them. If we assume with Baur that these books are the products of deliberate attempts at mediation between antagonistic parties, the history of similar disputes is enough to convince us that generations must have elapsed before such a controversy could have run its course, and closed in a re-united church and the production of a body of literature of which the New Testament contains but a portion. Or if we adopt the theory of Strauss, and assume that the Gospels embody the unintentional fictions of devout imaginations, all that we know about similar mythical

[28] Zeller and Ritschl.

growths proves, that for the development and reception of so complete, harmonious, profound, exalted a collection of myths, a long period of time is even more indispensable than before. Both these theories, therefore, while differing as to the mode in which the Gospels originated, agree in requiring a long period for the process. Time is indispensable to them. Hence both Strauss and Baur concur in fixing the date of our extant documents at from a century to a century and a quarter after the death of Jesus. By just as much as this interval is diminished, by just so much is the ground cut away upon which their theories rest. The physical philosopher often makes room for his speculations by postulating an indefinite period of time; and such a postulate, even if made without plausible pretext, can generally be made without fear of successful contradiction. But the deposit of Christianity in the world of thought took place within a period necessarily limited, and the limits of which historic research is perpetually narrowing. The boundary, on one side, is definitely fixed by the death of Jesus; while the other extreme, the earliest historic trace of our evangelic documents, is steadily approximating to it, and threatening to crush the theories of sceptics in a vise-like grasp.

1. It is allowable, perhaps, to begin the enumeration of the recent accessions of historical evidence by alluding to what is known as Muratori's "Fragment on the Canon." This document, which receives its name from the keeper of the Ambrosian Library at Milan, who discovered it, was first published more than a century and a quarter ago, — 1740. But Muratori published it chiefly to illustrate the neglect into which

letters sank in Italy after the barbaric invasion; and the form in which he gave it to the world was not wholly satisfactory. Only within a comparatively recent period has it assumed much prominence in biblical criticism; and but little more than three years have passed since Tregelles first edited a facsimile tracing of it. It comprises somewhat more than two leaves of what seems to be a mutilated commonplace-book of some monk of the seventh or eighth century, and consists of an account of the New-Testament books, given, apparently, with some controversial or argumentative end in view. A chronological allusion it makes indicates that the original document was written in the second half of the second century, — Tregelles thinks, "about A. D. 160, or earlier." It is the earliest catalogue of the New-Testament writings which has come down to us. In its present form, it is an illiterate translation into rustic Latin of a Greek original; and, although it contains but little information that is positively new, it is a document of great importance in its bearing upon our discussion. Passing by what it says about other sacred books, we are interested to notice that it recognizes indubitably our four canonical Gospels. For although, owing to the mutilation of the extant manuscript, its opening words relate to Mark, it continues by enumerating the Gospel according to Luke as the third; and, after a brief description of the author, mentions the fourth Gospel as written by John the disciple, and subjoins an account of the occasion of its composition, resembling traditions found in other patristical writings.

There are several particulars which give especial

value to this testimony. In the first place, it is testimony to a collection of sacred writings. Individual writers of an earlier date have left us evidence of their recognition of separate books in our canon: but here, in the third quarter of the second century, we have our four Gospels selected, and that, too (if we may believe the sceptical critics), from an unknown multitude of similar fictitious compositions; they, and they only, selected, — although, according to Baur and others, they were as yet only from ten to thirty years old, — we have these, our four Gospels, associated with Paul's Epistles and other books (making in all twenty-three out of our twenty-seven), as constituting one harmonious and recognized body of literature. Hence the independent attestations of particular books, which present themselves here and there during this same period, acquire new force and significance; for it appears that they are not isolated. They express, not private conjecture, but current opinion. Like the banners of a hidden army, or the peaks of a distant mountain-range, they represent, and are sustained by, compact, continuous bodies below.

Further: the value of this testimony to a collection of sacred books is enhanced by the locality which it represents. The existence, at this time or a little later, of a Syriac translation of the same writings, is evidence of their general reception among Eastern churches. Similar testimony, and perhaps more ancient, is afforded by the Latin version prepared in Northern Africa. But this document of Muratori's, by the order in which it arranges the Gospels, by the language in which it was originally written, by the reference it makes to Rome, may fairly be taken as a

witness to the faith of the Italian churches. By its aid, therefore, we can furnish reasonable proof of the reception, in the last half of the second century, of a collection of Christian documents, substantially identical with our New Testament, by the Christians of three continents, — Europe, Asia, Africa. When we consider the time required in those days for the multiplication and distribution of books, we shall pronounce the notion, that these writings — thus collected, translated, disseminated — had originated, for the most part anonymously, only a few years before, to be utterly improbable.

For notice, further, that this earliest list of the New-Testament writings is not improperly called a canon, — a recognized rule of Christian faith. In reference to the Gospels, the author says expressly, "Though various ideas are taught in each of the Gospels, it makes no difference to the faith of believers: since, in all of them, all things are declared by one leading Spirit concerning the nativity, the passion, the resurrection, the conversation [of our Lord] with his disciples, and his double advent, — first in humble guise, which has taken place; and afterward in royal power, which is yet future."[29] What more explicit summary of evangelic history, what more unequivocal assertion of its inspiration, could be desired, than is given us thus in the third quarter of the second century? Subsequently, in speaking of the writings of Paul and of John, he says, that, although nominally addressed to particular churches, they are intended for "the one catholic Church of the whole world." The half-controversial aim of the document renders

[29] Cf. Westcott, *Canon of the N. T.*, 2d ed., p. 188.

the significance of these confident utterances all the more weighty.

2. The next accession of external evidence that may be noticed occurred in connection with the pseudo-Clementine writings. These supposititious writings, which usurp the name of Clement, one of the early bishops of the Church at Rome, exhibit a half-Judaistic, half-Pantheistic type of doctrine, respecting the origin and relations of which critics are not yet agreed. That collection of them with which we are concerned is in Greek, and is known as the Homilies. It is a skilfully-constructed theological romance, in which Clement is both the hero and the narrator of the story. He sets out for Judæa in search of the truth; which he obtains at length from Peter, whom he is privileged to accompany in his apostolic journeys. The work contains covert yet indubitable references, in a hostile spirit, to the apostle Paul. Its date critics conjecture to lie somewhere between 150 A.D. and 170.[30] That these Homilies contain references to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke has been generally acknowledged. The apparent though less numerous allusions to Mark, also, were generally admitted; but whether the homilist actually quoted from our Gospel of John, or not, was a question on which the critics had already come to high words, when in 1853 the dispute was cut short by the discovery and publication of a new and complete manuscript of the work. The edition in use at that date contained but nineteen and a half of the twenty homilies included in the original work. The missing

[30] So, e.g., Uhlhorn in Herzog's Encyk., 2, 756; Scholten, *die ält. Zeug.*, p. 55; Volckmar, *d. Ursprung, etc.*, pp. 63, 136.

portion which was now brought to light not only gave additional references to the first three Gospels,[31] but silenced those who disputed the apparent allusions to John[32] by putting the following language into the mouth of Peter: "Our Master gave to the disciples — inquiring about the man sightless from birth, who received sight from him, 'Whether this man sinned, or his parents, that he was born blind' — this answer: 'Neither this man sinned at all, nor his parents, but that through him should be made manifest the power of God healing sins of ignorance."[33] The length of this passage, and its verbal identity, in the main, with the narrative in the Gospel, are so cogent a proof, that even Strauss[34] acknowledges here an undeniable reference to the ninth chapter of John.

3. In the year 1842, Mynoides Mynas, a Greek, who, by direction of the minister of public instruction under Louis Philippe, M. Villemain, had visited his native country in search of ancient manuscripts, brought to Paris, among other relics, a manuscript obtained at a convent on Mount Athos, and entitled "Refutation of All Heresies." After it had slumbered nearly a decade in the Imperial Library, one of the officers there, perceiving that it was the continuation of a fragment called "Philosophoumena" (i.e., "Philosophical Speculations"), already published in the works of Origen, ascribed it to that Church father, and, adopting the additional title, published the work at Oxford in 1851. On examining it, scholars were at once agreed that it was not written by Origen; and, by general consent, they have assigned it to Hippoly-

[31] Cf. Uhlhorn, p. 114.
[32] E.g., in Hom. 3, 52, to John x. 3, 27.
[33] Hom. xix. 22.
[34] *Leben Jesu*, 1864, p. 69.

tus, a bishop of learning and distinction, who was known to have written such a work in the first half of the third century. So here is a prominent Church father of the beginning of the third century who has come to life again in the middle of the nineteenth; and most interesting disclosures has he made to us about the history and polity of the early Church, particularly at Rome, and especially about the early errorists. What adds greatly to the value of his work is the circumstance, that it contains copious extracts from some fifteen or more lost writings of these heretics; and among these extracts we discover indubitable confirmation of the early existence of our canonical Gospels.

a. One of the oldest and most important representatives of that compound of heathen philosophy and Christian truth, known as Gnosticism, was Basilides, who lived, as Baur says,[35] "in the first decades of the second century" (say A.D. 125), and pretended that he had received esoteric instruction from the Saviour, communicated through the apostle Matthias. Now, in the quotations from his writings which Hippolytus gives us are clear references to the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and, most noteworthy of all, to the Gospel of John. After quoting the words of Moses, "Let there be light," Basilides adds,[36] "And this is what is said in the Gospels, 'That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'"

In another place[37] he says, "And that every thing has its proper season, the Saviour proves sufficiently

[35] *Dogmengesch.*, I. 1, p. 197.
[36] Hippol. vii. 22, ed. Dunck. & Schneid., p. 360.
[37] vii. 27, ed. Dunck. & Schneid., p. 376.

when he says, 'Mine hour is not yet come.'" Thus we have obvious quotations from the prologue of the fourth Gospel, and from the answer of Jesus to his mother at the marriage in Cana, — quotations made evidently as from an authoritative work,[38] — in this heretical writer of the year 125.

b. Another Gnostic leader of the same period was Valentinus. After having propagated his views several years at Alexandria, he came to Rome about A.D. 140. That he lived at only a single generation's remove from the apostolic age is evident from the circumstance that he, too, claimed to have received secret instructions from a disciple of Paul. From his writings, also, this newly-discovered "Refutation" makes copious quotations. And, in one passage,[39] Valentinus repeats from Luke the words, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; wherefore that which shall be born of thee shall be called Holy;" introducing them by the phrase, "According to that which was spoken," — the formula more than once used in the New Testament to usher in a passage from the Old. And in another passage near by[40] he is quoted as substantiating one of his doctrines by saying, "On this account the Saviour says, 'All that have come before me are thieves and robbers,'" — another manifest quotation from the fourth Gospel as from a current authority, and yet made a generation before the time when, according to the Tübingen critics, that Gospel was written.

Now, the authenticity of the disclosures which this

[38] Cf. Müller, *Barnabas-brief*, p. 127.
[39] vi. 35, ed. Dunck. & Schneid., p. 284 seq.
[40] l. c. p. 284.

resuscitated writer thus makes to us is not to be disputed. They bear every trace of having been drawn from primitive sources.[41] They concur with accounts of the doctrines of these heretics given us by two or three other early Christian writers, one of whom,[42] alluding to Valentinus's use of the New Testament, contrasts his treatment of it with Marcion's, saying, "Valentinus did not, like Marcion, suit the Scriptures to his doctrine, but his doctrine to the Scriptures, . . . robbing the words of their proper sense." And another, still earlier, referring to these and other errorists, says,[43] "So great is the surety of the Gospels, that even the very heretics bear witness to them; and each, making them his starting-point, endeavors by them to maintain his own doctrine. . . . Those who adhere to Valentinus make most abundant use of that according to John in proof of their system of consorts; yet the Gospel itself exposes their teachings as wholly erroneous. . . . Since, then, even our opponents give testimony in our favor by making use of these Gospels, our proof of them is strong and true."

4. But our review of the evidence that has come to light in support of the Gospels would be seriously defective without some mention of the discovery of the celebrated biblical manuscript at the Convent of St. Katharine, on Mount Sinai, which Tischendorf made on the 4th of February, 1859, and has since rendered familiar to every people of Christendom by his captivating account of the occurrence. In this Greek Bible, it will be remembered, the canonical books of the New Testament are followed by a letter

[41] Cf. Baur, *Kirchengesch.*, i. 213, note; 203, note.
[42] Tertullian, *de Præscript. Hæret.*, 38.
[43] Irenæus *adv. Hær.*, iii. 11, 7.

known as the Epistle of Barnabas. This is an anonymous anti-Judaistic production, not very dissimilar in aim to our Epistle to the Hebrews, yet so inferior to it in treatment as to set off by contrast the calm, broad, philosophic, spiritual views of Judaism which pervade the inspired book. Although called "The Epistle of Barnabas," the letter itself does not tell us either by whom or to whom it was written; and it gives internal evidence of having originated at too late a date to have been the production of the Levite of Cyprus, the associate of the apostle Paul. Still it is repeatedly ascribed to him by early Christian writers. It became so associated with the apostolic epistles, that, in the third century at least, it was read at public worship; and at Alexandria, at the close of the second century, it was held in such authority by one of the most learned Church fathers,[44] that he commented upon it. Hence its antiquity is indisputable. Indeed, many critics of different schools have supposed that it was written in the last quarter of the first century; and A.D. 120 seems now to be accepted as its approximate date.[45]

Now, down to the year 1859, the first four and a half chapters of this epistle were extant only in a rude Latin translation, in which the fourth chapter closed with these words: "Let us take heed, therefore, lest haply we be found as it is written, Many called, few chosen." These words are recorded only in the Gospel according to Matthew.[46] But the extraordi-

[44] Clement.

[45] So Volckmar, *Ursprung der Evang.*, p. 143; Baur, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengesch.*, ed. 2, p. 80 seq., and *Dogmengesch.*, i. 1, p. 249; Müller, *Barnabas-brief*, p. 18 seq., p. 335 seq.

[46] xx. 16; xxii. 14.

nary feature of the case was not that this very early writer should have borrowed from our canonical Gospel of Matthew (for that he has apparently done in other passages also), but that he should have prefaced his quotation with the formula, "As it is written." For, to Christian minds, this phrase associates itself with the authoritative use made in the New Testament of the Old; as, for example, when Satan tries to persuade Jesus to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple by saying, "It is written, He shall give his angels charge," &c., and Jesus answers, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Examination, it is true, shows [47] that this formula was not rigidly restricted in early Christian usage to canonical writings; but it does convey a plain intimation that the writing thus quoted is recognized as having authority. Such a sign of the authoritative recognition of Matthew's Gospel within the first quarter of the second century seemed to many critics too surprising to be credited. Accordingly, they preferred to suppose that the formula in question had been prefixed to the quotation, not by the original author, but by the translator, at a subsequent date. But this supposition was proved to be erroneous by Tischendorf's discovery just mentioned; for in the Greek text of the epistle, found in full in the Sinaitic manuscript, the quotation appears with the same formula prefixed. And even should we conjecture, as some have done,[48] that this remarkable phenomenon originated in a failure of memory on the

[47] See, e.g., Müller's *Barnabas-brief*, pp. 2, 126, seq.; Reuss, *Gesch. d. Heil. Schriften N. T.*, pp. 281, 290.

[48] Scholten, *Zeugnisse, etc.*, p. 10; Mey. on John, p. 5, note.

writer's part, so that for the moment he attributed in thought to the Old Testament this quotation from the New, the conjecture would hardly impair the significance of the fact; for to mistake these words for those of the Old Testament would imply long and reverent familiarity with them on the writer's part, and so would offer almost as good proof of their authoritative currency as the intentional application to them of this formula would give.

The early association by this writer of a Gospel with the Old-Testament writings as of similar weight is not an exceptional occurrence, expressive of exaggerated or merely private views. The contemporary Basilides, heretic as he was, spoke repeatedly of them in the same respectful manner; and one specimen of his language has already been quoted. Twenty years ago, it used to be thought that the earliest proof of the reception of New-Testament writings as of similar authority to the Old was to be found about the year 180;[49] but recent discoveries furnish indubitable evidence that even the Gospels had acquired such a reception more than half a century earlier.

Now, these new evidences, the chief of which have been thus cursorily described, we must remember are additional to what was adequate before. Notwithstanding the scantiness of the relics of the Christian literature of the first century and a half of our era which had come down to us, enough had survived to satisfy the vast majority of candid and competent inquirers that our four Gospels are trustworthy accounts of the life of Jesus. For these extant

[49] In Theophilus *ad Autolycum*, l. iii. c. 12.

relics proved that myriads of men in every part of the then civilized world accepted these Gospels as authentic. Upon faith in this authenticity, they deliberately staked their earthly welfare and their eternal hopes. They were interested, then, to ascertain the truth in the matter; and their proximity to apostolic times rendered them as able as they were interested. Their acceptance of them as the repositories of Christian truth gives these books, for us, a most trustworthy indorsement; an attestation wholly unlike that which any other ancient writings can show; an attestation corresponding to the momentous interests which the question at issue involves. This attestation has seemed to the mass of believers from generation to generation to be as satisfactory as it is ancient. But critics, in support of their modern assertion that our Gospels did not come into use till the second half of the second century, have alleged chiefly *negative* evidence; viz., that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not quoted by certain writers, who, according to these critics, might have been expected to use them, yet of whose works perhaps but scanty fragments have survived. Such negative evidence must have seemed, one would suppose, a most precarious basis to build upon; yet, strange to say, one elaborate theory after another, as we have seen, has been made thus to rest historically upon nothing. Silence added to silence, amounts, according to the reckoning of such critics, to positive denial.[50] Now, these recent discoveries, by carrying back for half a century the indubitable traces of the Gospels, prove such theories to be pure

[50] Cf. Zeller's argument in Riggenbach, *die Zeugnisse für das Evang. Johan.*, p. 107.

theories; not only without any actual, but without any possible, foundation; not only unsupported by the facts of history, but in opposition to the facts of history.

And this new evidence is not weakened by any new evidence on the other side. The discoveries all look one way. No counter-testimony has come to light: on the contrary, while the new scrutiny to which the history and literary relics of the second century have been subjected has more than once resulted in giving the believer assurance where before he had a reasonable conviction, the progress of discovery has imparted validity to many an apparent allusion of still earlier date, upon which a cautious scholarship has hitherto been indisposed to lay stress. Even in the apostolic fathers, a multitude of coincidences with our Gospels in thought, and sometimes in language as well, are to be met with; and the conviction is growing, that these coincidences are fairly entitled to weight in the argument. Under the influence of the accumulating evidence, writers who are far from being chargeable with partiality towards the evangelists have begun to insist on discovering traces of them in Clement and Hermas and Ignatius.[51]

But, it may be asked, where are the historical critics? Have they all surrendered?

When it was announced, last autumn, that proposals had been made for a secret treaty between France and Prussia, the first response was a denial

[51] Cf., for instance, Keim, *Jesu von Nazara*, 1. 141 seq. The correspondences in the Shepherd of Hermas have recently been drawn out by Zahn, *der Hirt des Hermas*, p. 453 seq.

that any such treaty existed. Then its alleged text was published. The answer was, "That's a fabrication." But the Prussian foreign office professed to exhibit the document. "Ah, yes!" said France: "that's a proposal made by Bismarck, which we at once rejected." — "But it is in Benedetti's handwriting." — "Y-e-s; but those are merely minutes made at Bismarck's dictation." And so the artful dodging went on. But secular diplomacy has no monopoly of the game to the exclusion of sacred diplomatics: on the contrary, if it can be played with current history, much more can it be played with past history. If disagreeable facts at the present day can be thus disposed of, we may be sure that the ingenuity of critics will not fail them when they have to do with records nearly eighteen centuries old. Accordingly, on being confronted with troublesome evidence, they are ready with their answer. The apparent quotation is merely an adaptation of a somewhat similar passage in the Old Testament;[52] or only the expression of one of the current thoughts of the time;[53] or the uncanonical writing itself is not genuine;[54] or the quoted passages are later interpolations; or the allegation about an earlier writer's use of the Gospels is due to ignorance, or is even a wilful falsification;[55] or subtile differences, even latent antagonisms of thought, are discovered to be lurking under identity of phraseology;[56] or the

[52] E.g., of 4 Ezra viii. 3 by Barnabas; cf. Scholten, *Zeugnisse*, p. 11; so Strauss, *Leben Jesu*, 1864, p. 55; Volckmar, Hilgenfeld, et al.

[53] Cf. Baur, *Evang.*, p. 349 seq.

[54] E.g., Polycarp's Ep., although acknowledged by his pupil Irenæus.

[55] Cf. Ritschl on Tertullian's testimony about Marcion in *Jahrbb. für d. Theol.*, 1866 p. 355 seq.

[56] E.g., Justin's doctrine of the Logos, and John's.

affinities of Christianity with speculations current at its birth are exaggerated, and its distinctive differences common to the Gospels and the fathers are overlooked;[57] or the testifying Christian writer is presumed to get his knowledge from some predecessor "of weak head," and blindly to reiterate erroneous statements;[58] or something is discovered in the ancient author's use of a Gospel which implies distrust of it;[59] or the reasons alleged[60] for the rejection of a Gospel by some early heretic (the mention of whose rejection implies general reception) are declared to be incorrect, and the rejection to have been prompted by the same reasons which induce modern critics to reject it; or, when a use of the Gospels can no longer be denied, the admission is rendered nugatory by altering the writer's date even almost a century,[61] or by the assumption that both the evangelist and the early writer make a common use of some anterior document conjured into existence by the critic on the spot.[62]

Truly, necessity is the mother of invention; but it is hard to say which is taxed most, — the invention of these critics, or the credulity of their readers. One cannot help asking, What would become of the world's belief in the genuineness of ninety-nine books out of every hundred if the evidence for them

[57] E.g., that the Logos became incarnate; common to John and Justin, yet foreign to Philo.

[58] E.g., Irenæus those of Papias.

[59] Cf. Volckmar on the Clemen. Homilies in Riggenbach, *Zeugnisse, etc.*, p. 80; and on Barnabas in *Ursprung der Evang.*, p. 66.

[60] E.g., by Tertullian of Marcion.

[61] E.g., Celsus made a contemporary of Origen by Volckmar, *Ursprung, etc.*, p. 80.

[62] Cf. Scholten on the Clementine quotation from John ix., *Zeugnisse, etc.*, p. 60.

were subjected to the treatment which these men call — probably without intending any double sense — "critical"? And how would they answer if we should invite them to exchange places with us for a time, and should demand of them proof for all their various and often conflicting assertions about lost writings, — pre-canonical, post-canonical, pseudonymous, apocryphal, and the like; about parties within the Church and without, and the literary fabrications they are alleged to have produced? These framers of hypotheses take to themselves the light work: the task is to prove or to believe their theories. And yet such a storm of evidence concentrates itself upon them sometimes, that they fly to the nearest shelter, even though, to get out of the rain, they get under the eaves. One of them has been driven to say that the doctrine of John was borrowed from Justin.[63] Sydney Smith, you remember, had a rural neighbor who was persuaded that the hundred and fourth Psalm was a plagiarism upon a devotional composition of his own.

But, notwithstanding all these ingenious devices, the later writers of the Tübingen school have been compelled to fall back from the more advanced position respecting the date of the Gospels; to shrink before the grasp of the vise. One of the most prominent of them[64] even affects to make it his endeavor "to put a stop to the excesses of modern criticism." Matthew's Gospel, the date of which, although the earliest of the four, fell, according to Baur, after 130, this critic carries back to between A.D. 70 and 80; and thinks that Matthew himself may have written

[63] Volckmar, *Urspr. d. Evang.*, p. 96. [64] Hilgenfeld.

the germ of it, although our canonical book is only a secondary, perhaps tertiary, formation of the original. This is but a sample of the chronological changes which the followers of Baur have felt themselves compelled to make. Even that one whose wild opinion about John was just alluded to holds that the composition of the first three Gospels began under Titus, and ended under Trajan, — about the year 110. And the most which a recent writer upon the history of the New-Testament books[65] can achieve for the Tübingen views is contained in the conclusion, that, "before the middle of the second century, history gives no answer to the question" (the wording of which we should notice), "'Do the writings of the New Testament proceed from the authors whose names they bear?' except in the case of sundry epistles of Paul and the Revelation." And this result he makes the basis of the cheering lesson, that "every endeavor to arrive at a knowledge of primitive Christianity by the path of external evidence must be regarded as fruitless."

V. — BUT IT IS TIME TO PASS ON AND CONSIDER A FEW MISCELLANEOUS PARTICULARS, IN WHICH IT APPEARS THAT CRITICISM HAS BEEN MINISTERING TO FAITH IN THE GOSPELS.

1. The opinion that the Gospels originated in the second century is only a part of a general theory respecting the internal history of the early Church and the development of Christian thought. That theory, by its novelty, its boldness, its harmony with the philosophy dominant in Germany at the time,

[65] Scholten, *die ältesten Zeugnisse, etc.*, 1867, p. 182 seq.

and through the learning and skill of its authors, found many adherents, and not a few advocates. But, as years have rolled on, it has not exhibited the marks of truth; discussion has not confirmed it; renewed examination has not augmented the faith of believers in it; discoveries have not ministered to it fresh support: on the contrary, historically it has been steadily losing ground, as we have seen. There has, indeed, been progress towards concentration of opinion, but a progress away from the chosen epoch; a concentration that is forced, and suggestive of that of the French at Sedan.

As research does not confirm the opinion of the Tübingen critics respecting the date of the Gospels, so it does not sustain their theory of the forces which gave them origin. A more careful study of extant literary relics, a more teachable tracing-out of the currents of thought in the primitive Christian world, has convinced students that the respective influences of Jewish and of Gentile Christianity have been greatly overrated. Neither in intensity nor in duration was the antagonism between the two such as it is assumed to have been by the theory of Baur; nor was universal Christianity produced by their neutralization: on the contrary, an impartial review of the teachings of Paul has shown here again, what all the rest of Christendom did not doubt, that, even in them, the Judaistic element is to be found as well as the Pauline; that they themselves afford in the first century the "neutral basis" for the Church universal, which, it was contended, we looked for in vain until the second.

The Tübingen criticism being thus invalidated in its

results respecting the date of the Gospels and the conflict which moulded them, the whole question of their characteristics and mutual relations has been reopened; and, in reference to it, the old saying has found fulfilment even among writers of the Tübingen school, — "Many men, many minds." In short, the Tübingen school is a thing of the past; not because its leader is dead, and the university to which he and his associates gave unenviable distinction for a season has come again, like the majority of German universities, under the influence of a believing scholarship, but because the opinions which the name represents have had their day. As a sect in biblical criticism, the Tübingen school has perished. Its history, even, has been written, and that in more than one tongue. Individual scholars there are who adhere still to certain of its distinctive tenets; one or two, indeed, who have gone beyond the extravagances of Baur himself: but they find few followers; and the most prominent and productive of them all[66] not only recedes half a century (as we have seen) from the original opinion respecting the date of the Gospels, not only acknowledges the genuineness of the Epistles to the Philippians, to Philemon, and the First to the Thessalonians, in addition to the four accepted by Baur, but is at pains to baptize his criticism with another name, — the "literary historical." Surely, if the Tübingen theory was not a compound of extravagances and half-truths, but unveiled for the first time the simple verity concerning early Christian history, strange that it should neither steadily win nor permanently keep converts! If true, why so defi-

[66] Hilgenfeld.

cient in the conquering and consolidating power of truth?

2. But not only has the Tübingen theory proved itself to be deficient in attractive and cohesive power: it is, in reality, destructive to the mythical theory with which it has a superficial agreement. Both theories agree, it will be remembered, in declaring that our Gospels orignated in the middle of the second century. But Baur acknowledged the four leading Epistles of Paul to be genuine, and to have been written before A.D. 60. Now, this admission is fatal to the sister-theory of Strauss; for these Epistles prove that Jesus was not an ordinary man, around whose idolized memory his disciples, in the course of a century or so, wreathed mythical fictions, not knowing what they did; but that the culminating facts of his life, the leading traits of his character, as given in our so-called mythical Gospels, are familiar to the Christian world within twenty-five years after his death. In these four Epistles we meet with allusions, some more, some less explicit, but all indubitable, to the institution of the last supper,[67] the betrayal,[68] the crucifixion,[69] the resurrection on the third day.[70] Jesus is spoken of as the image of God,[71] the Son of God,[72] the second Adam;[73] his death has saving efficacy;[74] his character is the disciple's pattern;[75] he

[67] 1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 23. [68] 1 Cor. xi. 23.

[69] 1 Cor. i. 13, 17; ii. 2, 8; 2 Cor. xiii. 4; Gal. iii. 1, 13; vi. 14.

[70] Rom. i. 4; iv. 24; vi. 9; vii. 4; viii. 11; x. 9; 1 Cor. vi. 14; xv. 4; 2 Cor. iv. 14; Gal. i. 1.

[71] 2 Cor. iv. 4.

[72] Rom. i. 3; Gal. iv. 4. [73] 1 Cor. xv. 45; Rom. v. 12 seq.

[74] Rom. iii. 25; iv. 25; v. 6 seq.; viii. 3, 32; 1 Cor. viii. 11; xv. 3; 2 Cor. v. 15 seq.; Gal. i. 4; ii. 20, 21; iii. 13.

[75] Rom. viii. 29; xiii. 14.

himself is source of spiritual life ;[76] possesses lordship over all men ;[77] will be their Judge ;[78] is the heavenly source of Paul's apostleship ;[79] and, associated with the Father, is fountain of grace and blessing.[80]

Now, this delineation of Christ, including cardinal facts in his history and a detailed conception of his person and work, agrees in all its main features with the portrait given by the evangelists; and more especially with that presented by the evangelist John, the development of which, we are told, required the lapse of a century or more from the crucifixion. This conception, too, is not so much presented by Paul as assumed. It is evidently well known to his readers alike in Asia, in Greece, in Rome. Not merely are cardinal facts, like the resurrection, referred to as unquestioned, but referred to as suggestive of spiritual lessons, — lessons familiarly associated with the facts in the readers' habits of thought: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" The facts themselves, therefore, which were thus associated with Christian instruction, must have been neither recent nor doubtful.

This disproof of the mythical theory, let it be noticed, is wholly independent of the extant Gospels. Let them have been written when, where, by whom you please. The value of a book depends not so much on its date or its author as on its contents. And here we have evidence, that, whenever and by whomsoever our Gospels may have been written, their contents are trustworthy. The Jesus they portray as

[76] Rom. viii. [77] Rom. xv. 9. [78] Rom. ii. 16; xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10.
[79] Gal. i. 1. [80] Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 3; Gal. i. 3; 2 Cor. xiii. 14, &c.

the Son of God, as the crucified and risen Redeemer and Lord, is no Galilean peasant, gradually glorified by the Oriental imagination of his superstitious admirers, but in the most transcendent facts of his life, in the most exalted functions of his character, is the general object of Christian faith within a quarter of a century after his crucifixion. The identity of the delineation of Christ which pervades the Epistles with that presented in the Gospels proves that the latter is no fancy picture, but a genuine portrait; no slowly-elaborated ideal creation, but a copy from life; no myth, but veritable history.[81]

3. Indeed, the acknowledgment that the authorship of these four Epistles is correctly ascribed to Paul seems to be not only irreconcilable with the mythical origin of the Gospels, but perilous to the theory of Baur himself. For how shall we reconcile with the vehemently anti-Judaistic views attributed by Baur to Paul the fact that we find him, in his letter to Christians at Corinth, speaking of Christ as our "passover," and writing to mingled Jewish and Gentile believers at Rome, whom he has never seen, with the evident assumption that both parties agree with each other and with him in the acceptance of a current conception of the character and work of Jesus? But we cannot enlarge upon this: it relates, moreover, to a point upon which the extravagance of Baur's views has been acknowledged by some of his followers,[82] as was said just now.

Equally irreconcilable with Baur's theory of the origin of the Gospels are the views of Christ and his

[81] See *The Jesus of the Evangelists*, by Rev. C. A. Row, chap. xvii.
[82] Cf., e.g., Ritschl's *altkath. Kirche*, 2d ed., 1857.

work which pervade the Apocalypse. For here, in "one of the oldest writings of the New-Testament canon," [83] Jesus is adored as the "first-begotten of the dead;" "the Lamb that was slain," in whose blood the robes of the saints are washed and made white, and unto whom they raise united praises for their redemption.

4. The futility which characterizes the theories of Strauss and Baur, regarded as explanations of the origin of Christianity, cleaves even more evidently to the attempts that have been made to explain away single yet fundamental facts in the evangelic history. The resurrection of Jesus is such a fact. "Beyond controversy," says Strauss, "the truth of Christianity stands or falls with the resurrection of Jesus." [84] And again: "Here we come to a point where we must either confess the inadequacy of the naturalistic view of the life of Jesus, and so give up our whole undertaking, or recognize our obligation to explain the belief in the resurrection without resorting to a miracle." [85] The attempts to fulfil this inexorable obligation have resulted in curious specimens of credulity and helplessness.

a. First we had warmed up for us the old Jewish story,[86] that the disciples came and stole the body.

b. A refinement upon this direct charge of falsehood upon the evangelists was the theory, that private friends, Joseph of Arimathea perhaps, removed it quietly from the tomb for final interment elsewhere, to the surprise alike of the disciples and the Jews.

[83] Baur, *drei ersten Jahrhund.*, 3d ed., p. 80.
[84] *die Halben und die Ganzen*, p. 127.
[85] *Leben Jesu*, 1864, p. 288.
[86] Matt. xxviii. 13.

c. Then followed the flat rationalistic assumption, that the death was only apparent, and the resurrection merely recovery from a swoon; so that the re-appearance from the sepulchre of this half-dead subject for the physician and the nurse enthroned him forever as the Lord of life![87]

d. Baur coolly substitutes for an explanation a refusal to give any. "For the disciples," he says, "the resurrection had all the reality of a historical fact;" and that is all that we need know. It is "not so much the fact of the resurrection, as the belief in it," which explains the history: "the real character of the resurrection lies outside of the sphere of historic inquiry."[88] This from the man who insists on "pure objectivity," and professes to tell how the history developed itself in its actual connections! The serpent rests on a tortoise; but what the tortoise rests on you must not ask.

e. But the favorite hypothesis of late (adopted also by Strauss) is that which ascribes the belief in Christ's resurrection to visions or hallucinations. The story which Paul says, within twenty-five years of the occurrence in question, he had preached at Corinth,[89] — that Christ rose on the third day, was seen by Peter, by the twelve, by above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the majority were still living, by James, by all the apostles, and, last of all, by the Apostle to the Gentiles himself, — this story with all its details, corroborating as they do the accounts in the Gospels, yet evidently not derived from them, we are asked to believe to be the product, in the

[87] Cf. Strauss's language, *Leben Jesu*, 1864, p. 298.
[88] *die drei ersten Jahr.*, p. 39 seq.
[89] 1 Cor. xv. 3 seq.

main, of the ecstatic or disordered state of mind of a man liable to nervous attacks, perhaps convulsions or epilepsy.[90] To the same purport Renan, except that, according to him, Mary Magdalen plays the principal part in originating the belief: "The passion of a visionary woman gives to the world a risen God;"[91] and except, further, that he feels himself authorized to give the story a more ample furnishing of stage properties. In the case of the twelve, he introduces "a draught of air, a rattling window, a casual murmur;"[92] and, in the case of Paul, to a sickly constitution he adds inflammation of the eyes, incipient fever with delirium, and very probably a thunder-storm from Mount Hermon.[93] But, gentlemen, even at the risk of seeming not to appreciate the psychological miracles which your theory proves you to be forward to admit, or the compliment which, in offering it to us, you pay us as "believers," we must beg to be excused.

f. The most recent anti-miraculous explanation of note is that of Keim. Having acknowledged Jesus to be a unique man, he refuses to deny him the possibility of manifesting himself again after death in some mysterious way; which, nevertheless, was for him altogether natural.[94] His theory is chiefly interesting as a confession of the unsatisfactoriness of preceding explanations, and an indication of the progress which criticism is making towards the simple verity of the biblical statements.

g. The only solution of this inexorable problem which can be said to have met with success of any

[90] Strauss, p. 302.
[91] *Vie de Jésus*, chap. xxvi. end.
[92] *Les Apôtres*, p. 22.
[93] *Les Apôtres*, p. 179 seq.
[94] *Gesch. Christus*, 2d ed., p. 133.

sort (of what sort you shall be judges) is Schenkel's. In his work on the "Character of Jesus," he speaks sadly of the prevalent disposition "to regard the physical re-animation of the Crucified as the essential point in the accounts of the resurrection." "The risen Christ is the transfigured and glorified Christ, the Lord who is the Spirit."[95] "Jesus Christ has truly risen; for he lives in his communion, not in flesh and blood, . . . but always present to the eye of faith." To the question, whether, by the resurrection of Christ, he understands merely this continued spiritual existence and influence, the reply is, No; not merely that: his appearances to his disciples were "real manifestations of his personality, which had come forth from death living and incorruptible." And so Schenkel has brought it to pass that both believing reader and sceptical are half-mystified. They dispute over the question, whether he does or does not believe in the resurrection as a fact of history. Those who assert that he does, "greatly misunderstand him," we are told; those who call him an unbeliever, "wickedly slander him." Schenkel had said that Strauss's theory, that the Christian Church was founded on hallucinations, "is at variance with a highly-organized historic sense:" Strauss, reviewing Schenkel's mystifications, declares in his rough way that "such flummery is an abomination to the most meanly-organized sense, moral as well as historical."[96]

Now, while the opponents of the Gospels pronounce thus one another's theories for explaining the disciples' belief that they had seen Jesus after his crucifixion to be unsatisfactory, we can hardly be blamed for

[95] Furness's trans., ii. 314 seq.
[96] *die Halben u. die Ganzen*, p. 62.

thinking them to be so also. Nay, more: if, after all the ingenuity hitherto expended on it, the question, "How came the disciples to believe that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day?" still remains unanswered, it ought not to be regarded as censurable in us to think that the origin of the belief finds simple and satisfactory explanation in the fact. At any rate, all hypotheses thus far having been exploded according to the judgment of the critics themselves, there should seem to be no other course left for plain people but to hold on a while longer to the opinion that the resurrection of Jesus was an actual occurrence. This opinion, to be sure, may possibly be erroneous: but it accounts for the origin and extension of the Christian faith as no other theory has accounted for them; it has witnessed the birth and the death of every opposing opinion; it gives to the believer such light in darkness, such strength in weakness, such triumph in the hour of dissolution, that we may well adhere to it as a working hypothesis until the critics devise another which they agree among themselves in pronouncing to be more plausible.

5. Further: the gain which the Gospels have made in the respect of critics is illustrated in successive Lives of Christ that have appeared during the past generation. Indeed, the bare circumstance that the life of Jesus has become the acknowledged arena of discussion is indicative of progress, and that in two respects. It is a restoration of the historical question to the period to which believers have always claimed that it belongs. The Tübingen critics, who boasted that they furnished us with the true solution of the origin of Christianity, found that solution, as

they thought, in the sub-apostolic age. Their theory made little account of the personal history of Jesus. Indeed, in 1846, Schwegler published an elaborate exposition of the rise of the early Church, in which Christ is despatched with the negative remark, that the historical sources are too uncertain and incomplete to permit us to sketch his portrait; and the rise of Christianity as an independent and universal religion is attributable to the apostle Paul.[97] But the recognition of Christ as the problem is virtually a confession that Christianity derived its origin from him from whom it takes its name; that, whatever part in founding it may have been borne by apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner-stone. Again: the concentration of discussion upon the history of Jesus is a favorable indication in its bearing upon the question of miracles. It is an acknowledgment that this question is a secondary and dependent question. Jesus himself is the miracle of miracles. No solution of the question of miracles apart from him can be satisfactory. If Christ was a supernatural being, no wonder he wrought supernatural works. And, on the other hand, it avails little to explain away the miracles as detached occurrences, so long as he by and for whom they were wrought is acknowledged to be an exceptional being, unique in character and endowments. Reduce him to the level of ordinary humanity, and the miraculous glories investing him disappear as surely as the rays of the sun are quenched when his descending disk has passed the horizon. That old inquiry, therefore, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?"—the question which

[97] Cf. Schwegler's *nachapostolisches Zeitalter*, i. 148.

perplexed the first learned opponents of his Messianic claims, — is still a summary presentation of the problem. Theories of history, philosophies respecting Nature, man, God, are all wrapped up in the reply to this one inquiry.

a. Strauss, to be sure, entitled his first book "The Life of Jesus." Such a title would, at the present day, excite an expectation to which the contents of that work do not correspond; for it is devoted to showing that what the Gospels narrate either did not occur, or did not so occur as it is narrated to have taken place. This is the sum and substance of his book. He tried to prove that the contents of the Gospels are not historical, but largely mythical.[98] His method of proof consisted in exhibiting the difficulties besetting the orthodox interpretation of the narratives on the one hand, and the rationalistic interpretations on the other; and, finally, the points of resemblance between the narratives and the contents of the Old Testament. But who and what Jesus was he left the reader to glean from the volumes for himself. The work is thoroughly destructive and negative. No attempt is made even to show how many of the supposed works and words of Jesus may be accepted as historic, much less to combine these scanty relics into a harmonious representation of either the actual experience or the spiritual characteristics of the Man of Nazareth; and to the Gospels, their historical relations, and the formidable proofs adducible in support of their genuineness, he did not condescend to devote a single section.

b. In 1864, twenty-nine years afterwards, Strauss

[98] Band I. Vorr. S. iii. seq.

published a reconstruction of his "Life of Jesus," prepared, as the titlepage tells us, "for the German people." It is, professedly, a re-affirmation of his earlier views, but, nevertheless, exhibits significant changes both in general treatment and in important details. The attempt still to construct a life of Jesus on a mythical basis, after all the progress which discussion has made during the past thirty years, has been pronounced a "critical anachronism:" and Strauss seems to have felt in advance the justice of the sentence; for, in his second "Life," he has essentially altered his definition of a myth. It no longer signifies a visionary, undesigned glorification of Jesus, but is confessedly made to include a considerable element of intentional fabrication.[99] As respects several of the distinctive ideas of modern Christianity, — those, for instance, relative to the personal dignity of Jesus, his judicial and redemptive authority, — the disciples are admitted to have been misled by Christ's own extravagant statements.[100] The discrepancies between the different Gospels, Strauss is now inclined to make less of than formerly; even takes it upon him to speak a word of caution against the extravagance of Baur's views in this particular; intimating, that, in his judgment, Baur has sought out a dogmatic significance in variations which are really attributable to mere want of precision or to accident.[101] The arbitrary assumptions of the rationalists, over which he was as ready in his former work as anybody to make merry, he is now not above resorting to in an exigency; as when, in order to help out his visionary theory of the resurrection, he talks about the disci-

[99] P. 159. [100] P. 242. [101] P. 114.

ples' excited imagination transforming "the next best stranger" they met with on the way to Emmaus into an apparition of their departed Master.[102] And not only by changes of this sort, even though some of them are from bad to worse, does Strauss betray his sense of the advance the whole discussion has made during thirty years: he gives evidence to the same point more directly and unequivocally. Formerly he was contented with a negative result, — with the attempt to show that the current accounts about Jesus are not historic: now he devotes a hundred and fifty-four pages — nearly a fourth of his book — to an "historical sketch of the life of Jesus." Then not a section was given to the Gospels considered as sources: now their origin, their nature, their relations to each other, are discussed through more than a hundred pages, — of a book, remember, professedly written for the people. Indeed, then he claimed to write for theologians only, and avowed an unwillingness to disseminate doubt among lay-readers:[103] now, he says, he turns from the theologians to the people, as the apostle Paul turned from the unbelieving Jews to the heathen.[104] Formerly he boasted of his dispassionateness: "Science thinks," he said; "she has no emotions:"[105] now he declares, that, "to rid the Church of parsons, religion must be rid of miracles."[106] In fact, he often writes like a man who has lost his temper; and the general tone of his book is certainly not that of a man who feels that he is on the winning side.

c. The first appearance of Strauss's "Life of Jesus"

[102] P. 308.
[103] See especially *Streitschriften*, i. 20; iii. 132.
[104] *Leben Jesu*, 1864, *Vorrede*, p. xii.
[105] *Streitschriften*, iii. 138.
[106] *Leben Jesu*, 1864, *Vorr.*, p. xix.

produced an excitement in the theological world which has been rarely paralleled. Denunciation and persecution were visited on its author from many quarters. While the Prussian ministry for spiritual affairs had under consideration the expediency of prohibiting the sale of the book within the kingdom, Neander came forward, and earnestly dissuaded from the employment of forcible measures in a spiritual struggle. The advice was heeded, and resulted in the appearance, in 1837, of his "Life of Jesus Christ," which has had a wide circulation in many lands.

For the part which he took in vindicating intellectual liberty, Neander deserves the gratitude of every lover of truth; for the reverent and attractive delineation of the traits of Jesus as the Son of God, he received the merited commendation of the friends of Christianity; while the candid and kindly spirit in which he conducted the argument rendered the influence of his work at the time as salutary as it was extensive. But it has ceased to be a satisfactory book. It falls short of the claims of the theme. For an historic work, it is swayed too largely by subjective influences. Many of its positions are assumptions. Many of its assumptions, although opposite to those of Strauss, are argumentatively viewed as unwarranted. His discussion of the Gospels considered as sources of history is meagre and unsatisfactory. Many of the doctrinal views he presents are deficient in sharpness and consistency; while, respecting several of our Lord's leading experiences and important works, the writer himself seems not to be free from doubt. Such large concessions does he sometimes make, so wavering and weak is his presentation of the case,

that for whole paragraphs we seem to be listening to some semi-rationalistic writer rather than to a champion of the faith. Indeed, it affords a striking illustration of the progress we are considering, that a book which a generation ago was greeted with thankfulness, and which, no doubt, owed not a little of its success to its mediating character, should now be felt on all hands to be fairly open to the vitriolic criticism of Strauss, who, in 1864, writes of it as follows: "Neander's 'Life of Jesus Christ' has three mottoes, — from Athanasius, Pascal, and Plato. All good spirits of theology and philosophy were invoked in this extreme tribulation: only that motto is wanting which would have suited the book itself, and been, besides, a biblical one; viz., the saying in Mark ix. 24: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." [107]

d. Prof. Schenkel of Heidelberg does much towards forestalling criticism by disclaiming the intent to write a "Life of Jesus," and entitling his book a "Portrayal of the Character of Jesus." All the more emphatic, therefore, is the testimony to the growing esteem for the Gospels as historic documents, which is afforded by the fact that it was felt necessary to prefix to such a work an estimate of the credibility of the evangelists, accompanied by a protracted review of the traditional evidence in their favor. Dr. Schenkel accepts them as independent of one another, and although of unequal historic value, yet substantially credible; "otherwise," he says, "the attempt to portray the person of Jesus would be labor lost." [108] He assumes the priority of Mark's Gospel, although

[107] *Leben Jesu*, p. 31 seq.

[108] Cf. Furness's trans., i. pp. 19, 20.

he thinks (without historic warrant) that it has not come down to us in its original form; and fixes the date of the (imaginary) primitive Mark at from A.D. 45–58,[109] notwithstanding the express testimony of Irenæus,[110] that the Gospel was written "after the death of Peter and Paul." The fourth Gospel — which cannot, in his judgment, have been the work of the apostle John — was, nevertheless, written between A.D. 110–120; and after arguing from the absence of development in the character of Jesus, and of all trace of conflict or progress, that it sets forth an ideal rather than an historic personage, he concludes, to the surprise of the reader, by saying that "the fourth serves as a really historical authority for the representation of the moral being of Jesus. . . . Without it, the unfathomable depth and the inaccessible height would be wanting to us, and his boundless influence would forever remain a riddle." So that, though "Jesus Christ was not actually what the fourth Gospel paints him, he was that in truth." [111]

In his dealing with the contents of the Gospels, Schenkel is as arbitrary, as confused, and as inconsistent, as he is in his treatment of them as documents. His avowed aim is, to "gather from the extant written records a real idea of Christ, faithful to the original, and of genuine historical truth." [112] And, on examination, he finds "a portrait of Jesus, which, with the exception of the miracles, is perfectly intelligible." [113] Rather an important exception, that! And what does Prof. Schenkel do with it? He distributes miracles into two classes. The first comprises all cases of heal-

[109] Furness, i. 201. [110] In Euseb. Ch. Hist., v. 8.
[111] Furness, i. p. 46. [112] Furness, i. pp. 14, 17. [113] P. 31.

ing; which were, as he believes, in reality no miracles at all, but merely natural results attributable to the extraordinary physiological or psychological endowments of Jesus. The other class consists of wonders wrought, not on man, but on nature, and which, accordingly, cannot be attributed to known laws of personal influence, but must be confessed to be acts of almighty power. "These miracles of omnipotence," he says, "are, humanly considered, incomprehensible."[114] Accordingly, it is more than doubtful whether such events ever took place. But how eliminate them from narratives composed for the very purpose of relating them? Sometimes by passing them over in silence; in other cases by dismissing them as "exceptional;" elsewhere by representing them to be mythical or legendary embellishments; again, by supposing that Mark went beyond the statements of Peter; and even by assuming that "Peter himself, following Old-Testament precedents, may have set many of the evangelical occurrences in a miraculous light,"[115] — an assumption which certainly sets neither apostle nor critic in a very creditable light.

Not less embarrassing are the difficulties which Prof. Schenkel encounters in executing his main undertaking after recognizing the substantial credibility of the earlier Gospels. Starting from a humanitarian conception of the person of Jesus, and assuming for him a development like that of other men, he is compelled to read the gleams of a divine consciousness out of the record; to force his preconceptions upon the narrative, instead of teachably educing the traits of Jesus from it; to modify what he does not deem

[114] Furness, i. pp. 27, 28. [115] Furness, i. 247 seq.; 274 seq.

to be "quite worthy" of Jesus; indeed, to deny that Jesus uttered what does not harmonize with the portrait Dr. Schenkel has planned to draw. That portrait, in fact, is the Jesus of Schenkel rather than the Jesus of the evangelists.

e. Indirect testimony to the growing authority of the Gospels, similar to that which Schenkel's book affords, is exhibited by Renan in his "Life of Jesus;" for here we find again, that, after acknowledging the early origin and substantial authenticity of the records,[116] the biographer is compelled to resort in like manner to devices of all sorts to escape the legitimate consequences of this acknowledgment. His adoption of the legendary, as distinguished from the mythical theory, relieves him considerably from the difficulties with which the admitted date of the Gospels would encumber a follower of Strauss; and yet he finds himself in a strait again and again. After having made large deductions on the score of legend, and dislocated, accepted, rejected, or transformed, the remnants at his pleasure,[117] he is compelled to confront the old dilemma: either Jesus was a fanatic or an impostor, or both. And although he does not spare the character of Jesus, but represents him occasionally as "vain," "weak," "irritable," "resentful," "a disorganizer," even so he cannot escape the alternative of either miracle or fraud, but admits the latter; for instance, at the raising of Lazarus. Strauss's remark,[118] that Jesus, in offering prayer on that occasion,

[116] Life of Jesus, p. 34, N.Y. 1865, Wilbour's trans.

[117] See an impartial review of Renan's historic method by Colani in the Strasburg *Revue de Théologie*, published also in a separate form (1864). The reviewer shows that Renan, after adopting the chronology of John, "according to which the public life of Jesus lasted three years," extends it to *five!*

[118] *Leben Jesu*, 1864, p. 476.

for the sake of the multitude standing around, "appeared as a play-actor, and as a clumsy one at that," is offensive enough; but what shall we say to the representations of Renan?[119] — "Thoroughly persuaded that Jesus was a worker of miracles, Lazarus and his two sisters may have aided the performance of one; as so many pious men, convinced of the truth of their religion, have sought to triumph over human obstinacy by means of the weakness of which they were well aware. . . . As to Jesus, he had no more power than St. Bernard or St. Francis d'Assisi to moderate the avidity of the multitude and of his own disciples for the marvellous. Death, moreover, was in a few days to restore to him his divine liberty, and to snatch him from the fatal necessities of a character which became every day more exacting, more difficult to sustain."[120] What does criticism itself say to the idea that the crucified Author of the religion of truth was a weakling and a cheat? It "protests against it in the name of impartial history;"[121] it declares[122] that Renan is far below the level of his theme; that the true Jesus towers immeasurably above the species of "renowned charlatan," the "medley of devotion and duplicity,"[123] portrayed by him. Indeed, the most cursory reader of the book finds himself perplexed at its occasional religious outbursts; for example, the apostrophe with which the account of the crucifixion is concluded: "Repose now in thy glory, noble founder! Thy

[119] P. 306. [120] Cf. pp. 303, 304. [121] Colani, p. 69.

[122] See, e.g., Ewald in the *Gött. gelehrt. Anzeig*, and Keim in the *Augsb. Zeit.*, as quoted in *M. Renan réfuté par les Rationalistes Allemands*, par l'Abbé Meignan, Paris, 1863.

[123] Colani, p. 70; cf. p. 73.

work is finished; thy divinity is established. . . . Between thee and God there will no longer be any distinction," &c.[124] On Renan's view, such language is adulation. The object of it is unworthy. Adoration and censure cannot be thus brought into alliance. The incongruity glares upon every reader; so that, notwithstanding Renan's pictorial skill, his vivid delineations of scenery, his familiarity with Jewish literature and usages, his captivating reproduction of contemporary religious and social life, — all which have contributed to give his book an unparalleled circulation, — regarded as a life of Jesus, it is acknowledged to be a failure by the sceptic as well as by the believer.

f. The latest noteworthy attempt to write a critical Life of Jesus is that by Prof. Keim of Zürich. His work is still incomplete; and yet it is plain, from the portion which has appeared,[125] that while, like Schenkel, he is inclined to exaggerate what is ideal and psychological at the expense of what is historical, he treats the Gospels with increased deference. Indeed, nearly half of the first volume of upwards of six hundred pages is occupied with discussing the historical sources of his work and the religious opinions and parties existing in Palestine at our Lord's advent. As the result of these discussions in reference to the Gospels, we find him approximating closely to the dates which believers have currently accepted as the time of their origin. The Gospel of Matthew, for instance, assumed "substantially the form in which we

[124] P. 351.

[125] Together with the author's earlier writings on the same subject, *der geschichtliche Christus, drei Reden, etc.*, 2d. ed., Zürich, 1865.

now have it" between 70 and 80 A.D.[126] John's Gospel "undoubtedly arose between 100 and 117 A.D.;"[127] and "extant literature gives as early evidence of its use as of the first three."[128] These are his statements; although he calls Baur his "great master,"[129] and vigorously opposes the fourth Gospel's genuineness. Indeed, in the last-named particular he goes beyond his master, and refuses to acknowledge the intrinsic excellence of this Gospel, talking about its "leaden monotony," — partly because the representation it makes of our Lord as having seen and announced his death from the outset of his ministry does not harmonize with Prof. Keim's idea of the process of development through which Jesus passed; and partly, perhaps, because of the instinctively-felt necessity of deducting from the Gospel's worth in proportion as addition is made to its age. As respects the spirit also in which Keim prosecutes his work, he is as much in advance of many of his predecessors as he is in his recognition of the early origin of the Gospels. He professes "not to have sacrificed his heart's interest in the religious heaven of Christendom for a position of cold neutrality, which becomes partisan simply by being neutral;"[130] and declares with warmth, "I know no higher name that fills my entire spirit than the name of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world; and I intend to write in the interests of piety itself," &c.[131]

The progress which these successive Lives of Christ attest is as marked as it is gratifying. Beginning with the work by Strauss, whose aim was "to put out the lights," we are brought down through the

[126] *Jesu von Nazara*, i. 636. [127] i. p. 146. [128] P. 137.
[129] Cf. also Vorw., p. ix. [130] *Jesu von Naz.*, i. p. vii.
[131] *Gesch. Christus*, 2d ed., p. 12.

views of the Tübingen theologians, who made Jesus little more than the vehicle of an idea, to a time when, on the one hand, the Gospels are acknowledged to date back to the first century, and to be in the main authentic; and, on the other, Christianity, in some substantial definition of it, is confessed to have been the personal work of Jesus. The problem to which scepticism now stands committed is, while acknowledging the Gospels to be, in the main at least, historical sources, to render Jesus of Nazareth comprehensible as an historical personage. That problem it has not yet solved. Of the various attempts to solve it made of late years in Germany, France, England, none can be regarded as final. Whatever their merits, they have not yet achieved the task of explaining the character and the career of Jesus by the ordinary laws of psychology and history. However commendable the aim may be to render his interior development conceivable on the principles of ordinary human nature, it is beginning to be perceived that any merely humanitarian exposition of it leaves out essential factors.[132] The failure to fathom him with human plummet is beginning to suggest to the critics themselves the infinite depths of his being.

Nor are the indirect benefits of these biographical attempts restricted to the current estimate of the person of Jesus. They are likely also to enhance the appreciation of the historic fairness of the evangelists; for although their authors profess to have endeavored to delineate Christ "in his objective

[132] In commenting on the baptism of Jesus, says Keim (i. 549), "Our historical conscience compels us to confess . . . that a divine intimation and control must have attended the greatest act and the greatest crisis in the history of mankind," &c.

reality," to combine in their delineations merely historic and unquestionable traits, and although they write under the clarifying and unifying influences of eighteen centuries of Christian thought, they present us with portraits in which we detect at once the personal traits of the draughtsman. The reader of the "Life of Jesus" by Strauss does not need to be told that its author is a learned theorist, a philosophical speculator; we require no knowledge of the ecclesiastical politics of Baden to enable us to detect the traces of religious demagogism in Schenkel's book; and the "Vie de Jésus" reflects like a mirror the romantic, inconstant Frenchman, of exquisite tastes, but easy virtue. And what interpreter would attempt to harmonize the three? In contrast with such representations of Jesus as these, the accounts of the sacred biographers appear as transparent and guileless as the light.

Such a survey as we have now taken of the course of hostile criticism respecting the Gospels necessarily suffers from incompleteness both of statement and of proof. But the deficiencies, if supplied, would not improve the case for the critics: on the contrary, hostile criticism has stimulated believing criticism. The assaults upon the Gospels have quickened the study of them, and especially of the character of Him of whom they testify. The result is, that new resources of Christian evidence are constantly coming to light. A collation, for instance, of the slight differences of form in any given passage of our Gospels as it is found in the very oldest extant writings (say even in Marcion's time), reveals the fact that their

text had gone through a series of successive transcriptions before the date at which, according to scepticism, it had its origin. And so textual criticism, which in its infancy was frowned upon by Christians and welcomed by unbelievers, which sturdy John Owen declared to be "atheistic,"[133] is bringing its tribute to the authority of that Word from which no jot or tittle shall pass away.[134] The searching analysis of the character of Christ which scepticism has instituted and provoked is establishing in the general mind the conviction which the first Napoleon is said to have uttered so emphatically:[135] "I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ was not a man." The treatises of Dorner (whose earlier and principal work had its origin in Tübingen itself), Ullmann, Oosterzee, Pressensé, and others, on the Continent, of Young, Bayne, Liddon, and others, in Great Britain, and those of Bushnell and of Schaff in our own country, are specimens of the varied arguments for Christianity which this branch of the controversy alone has added to the Christian's armory. And analogous resources of Christian defence are coming to light in the naturalness and harmony of other characters, glimpses of which are given us here and there throughout the New Testament. The combination

[133] Tregelles' *Printed Text of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 47 seq., 261 seq.

[134] Cf. Tischendorf, *Wann wurden unsere Evangelien verfasst*, 4th ed., pp. 120 seq., 126. Indeed, it is beginning to be thought that the very language of the New Testament, which, after more than a century's opposition from those whose zeal for God was not according to knowledge, was at length confessed to prove its authors to have been unlettered Jews, may yet throw light upon the more exact date even of the records, when the details of its history shall have been more precisely ascertained than they are at present. Of little worth, however, are such over-hasty judgments as those given in Geldart's *Modern Greek Language*, Appendix I., except as stimulating to a more cautious and thorough inquiry.

[135] See *The Person of Christ*, by Dr. P. Schaff, pp. 316, cf. 300 seq.

of these scattered traits presents us, in each case, with a personality so consistent, so sharply defined, so real, as to leave no doubt that it was drawn from the life. And thus the characteristics of John, Paul, Peter, corroborate, in turn, the historic verity of the Gospels, and the genuineness of the Epistles bearing their names. The apostles themselves are becoming living witnesses again for Christ.[136]

Indeed, the gravest deficiency with which this review is chargeable is with a neglect to recognize all the services rendered by sceptical criticism to faith. The critics, for example, by refusing to regard the Bible longer as a common storehouse of religious truth, by declining to exempt it from the processes of literary criticism, have led the way to a more discriminating acquaintance with its contents. They have taught us to distinguish its constituent parts, and to notice how each stands related to the circumstances of its origin; and thus, — although they meant it not so, neither was it in their heart, — by emphasizing the doctrinal peculiarities of Peter, of Paul, of James, of John, they have helped us to appreciate the wonderful harmony which underlies these peculiarities. This disclosure of unity amid diversity, this blended independence and coincidence, is another attestation of the truth. Surely the authors must all have been taught of God. Nor is this beneficial result restricted to the New Testament. Strauss, by tracing out industriously the minute correspondences between the New Testament and the Old, has been preparing the way

[136] Among arguments of this class are Howson's Hulsean Lectures on the Character of St. Paul; Leathes' Bayle Lectures, entitled The Witness of St. Paul to Christ, The Witness of St. John to Christ; Stanley's Sermons and Essays on the Apostolical Age.

for the participation of the Old Testament in the coming triumph of the New; for the victory of the whole Bible, and the Bible as a whole. Nor can we pass over in silence a benefit, the full magnitude of which has yet to be realized. The exaggerated representations, as made by the Tübingen school especially, of the doctrinal differences among the New-Testament writings, have given a new impulse to the department of biblical theology, — an impulse among the first believing fruits of which in Germany was Neander's admirable work on "The Planting and Training of the Christian Church," and which has already begun to affect the pulpits and the seats of learning in English-speaking lands.[137] In obedience to this impulse, systematic theology may be expected to become less speculative and dogmatic, and more scriptural. Doctrinal systems, instead of being constructed, as they have too often been, of abstract reasonings, to which a biblical proof is added as a seemly yet rather superfluous appendage, bid fair to be compacted of the inspired statements, completely collected, impartially interpreted, harmoniously combined. Thus, by occasioning a modification of our scientific methods, scepticism is rendering the presentation of the truth more life-like and authoritative, and so contributing to its own overthrow.

In a word, the future belongs to the Bible and its friends. The results of critical research hitherto, while, on the one hand, they may well render scep-

[137] As appears from the department of biblical theology recently organized in some of our theological institutions, and such publications as Dr. J. P. Thompson's Theology of Christ, New York, 1870; Dr. W. J. Irons's Christianity as taught by St. Paul, Bampton Lectures for 1870; and Prof. Smeaton's works on the Doctrine of the Atonement as taught by Jesus and by the Apostles.

ticism modest, not to say self-distrustful, are fitted, on the other hand, to augment the assurance of those who believe in the historic trustworthiness of the evangelists. Accordingly, the most searching inquirers may receive our God-speed. Let them be free and fearless, so they be honest and accurate; for they can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. They are but extending and deepening the foundations of an intelligent faith. They are but tunnelling and filling up, and making straight, a highway for our God through places now desert. Indeed, a more correct summary of the result of their labors to the present time can hardly be given than by accommodating words published by Strauss himself the year before his "Life of Jesus" first appeared. In passing judgment on the labors of certain critics of that day, he spoke of "the stratagem by which Reason deprives her instruments of a sight of the whole realm of her activity, in order that they, laboring undismayed each at his allotted portion, may advance her great work of educating the race." [138] A genuine Caiaphan utterance this.[139] Substituting for an impersonal reason an all-controlling God, we may say, that while the sceptics have supposed themselves to be working, each at his chosen task, they have, in reality, been co-working in the execution of the divine design of educating the race up to the truth as it is in Jesus.

And let not our cheerful recognition of the benefits which have accrued to the Bible from the assaults of its adversaries be made by the latter a pretext for charging us with an abandonment of our position,

[138] *Jahrb. für wissensch. Krit.*, 1834, quoted by Hilgenfeld *die Evangelien*, p. 6.
[139] Cf. John xi. 49 seq.

or, at least, with a change of front. Such a charge, indeed, is not surprising from men who conceive of the Bible as a collection of documents that determine doctrine on all points at once and forever, instead of prompting, guiding, answering religious inquiry from generation to generation; such a charge is in keeping with the arraignment of the biblical writers for contradiction, because their doctrinal views do not all wear the same hue, — as though light were any the less light, or from heaven, because tinted by the medium through which it passes: but such a charge sounds oddly when coming from men who boast of applying the same laws to religion as to all other realms of thought. For where else is not progress expected? In what other department is not time acknowledged to be necessary for the comprehension, development, application, of great ideas? But, however it may please any to misinterpret our recognition of the law of development, — a law, the recognition of which is a marked characteristic of the documents constituting the Christian revelation, and traces of which are evident even in the Gospels themselves, — recourse to that law is no modern device of apologetics. Criticism, by calling attention to the early relations of Judaism to the Christian faith, to the divers aspects which the latter presents in the different canonical writings, and to the like undiscovered or unheeded biblical facts, has, at the most, been but fulfilling the prediction which the sons of the Pilgrims, from generation to generation, never weary of repeating; — that "the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth out of his Holy Word;" for, as Bishop Butler has

said, "It is not at all incredible that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered." "And as it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so, if it ever comes to be understood, . . . it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at, — by the continuance and progress of learning and of liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down in it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world."[140] Indeed, so far is this notion of progress in understanding and stating the contents of the Bible from being a makeshift to escape the consequences of hostile criticism, that even the most conservative class of believers, whose adherence to tradition precludes inquiries like those the course of which we have been reviewing, can utter with Dr. Newman such language as this: "The whole Bible is written on the principle of development: . . . Christian doctrine admits of formal, legitimate, and true developments."[141] And we who find a legitimate province — I had nearly said *the* legitimate province — for reason in religion, must, of necessity, recognize there the law of growth, and maintain that Christianity, the conception of the person, work, doctrine, of Jesus Christ, can only come to its perfection in the course of time; indeed, "can only be approached by asymptotes."[142] Those, therefore, do us injustice who talk of Christians as cast-iron conservatives, the enemies, or at least the laggards, of learning, setting

[140] Analogy, pt. ii. ch. iii. p. 227, Bohn's ed.
[141] Dr. J. H. Newman's Essay on Development of Christian Doctrine.
[142] Niebuhr.

their face as a flint against modern research. On the contrary, Christian theology claims to be "the science of sciences." Biblical criticism, certainly, is no infidel or forbidden thing: as was said at the outset, it is the legitimate child of our Protestant faith. The renunciation of bondage to tradition imposed the necessity, as it afforded the opportunity, for the inquiries in which Christendom is engaged. It is quite possible indeed, as experience has abundantly proved, for religious inquiries, like other inquiries, to be begun in prejudice, and prosecuted for the maintenance of foregone conclusions. Reason and conscience men can misuse in matters of religion as in matters of every-day life; but, whatever the department which inquiry involves, — whether criticism, history, philosophy, — there should it be prosecuted untrammelled. The faith of the Christian is a faith for which he is ready to render a reason. Joy and peace in believing are the prize of him that overcometh.

And as the struggle now pending is one which might have been predicted, so its issue can hardly be doubtful. There are those, indeed, who assure us that Christianity is already a thing of the past. They cannot condescend longer to discuss biblical questions. Believers in miracles they would fain look upon as of unsound mind. The objections to the Gospels are familiar to the inhabitants of Iceland; and the natives of India are reading Renan and Strauss in their vernacular. But let not diffusion be mistaken for depth: let it not be overlooked that foreign nations are but learning the lesson which Germany, their teacher, is beginning to unlearn; that

sceptical criticism in other lands is flaunting herself in the cast clothing of her German sister. Nor let the opponents of the Bible think us presumptuous if we interpret the very superciliousness of their bearing towards biblical questions as a sign of weakness: indeed, it is because the scholarship of Germany is candid and thorough enough to confess these questions to be not yet past argument that it is passing from unbelief to faith. There is always hope for a man so long as he is ready to look at evidence and to follow it.

But perhaps some one asks, "Must I force my way through the jungles of criticism, must I thread these historical and philosophical labyrinths, in order to arrive at the faith of a Christian?" By no means! Yet, when it is alleged that the pretensions of Christianity are at variance with the facts of history or with the principles of philosophy, the allegation must be tested on its own grounds. And the exhibition of the harmony between biblical truth and every other department of science affords a constantly-augmenting presumption that the Scriptures emanated from the Author of Nature, the Father of the spirits of all flesh. But such inquiries are no more a necessary preliminary to participation in the benefits of Christian faith, than a comprehension of the phenomena of the photosphere is a prerequisite for receiving light and warmth from the sun. To think to become a Christian by any such process of investigation is like a patient's expecting to recover his health by analyzing his physician's prescription instead of taking it. Jesus Christ offers himself to the race as the Saviour from sin; invites every man to enter into present, personal, prac-

tical relations with him. All inquiries respecting his life, character, work, that fall short of establishing this living, loving relationship, are of little account. But, this relationship established, the inquirers can say to the critic, "No longer do we believe because of thy story; for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

IX.

JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF THE ALL-SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY REV. D. S. TALCOTT, D.D.

"BE *ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you*," — *an* answer, *a* reason. The form of expression rather suggests the idea of there being room for choice, as if there might be a store of *answers*, *reasons*, from which to draw the material of defence. And it is only what might have been expected, on the supposition of there being a divinely-revealed religion for the world, that the evidence of it should be exceedingly manifold, that it should stand connected at so many points with the constitution of the human mind, and should be so thoroughly interwoven with the whole course of human history, as to be in the highest degree complex and cumulative, and capable of being presented in an endless variety of aspects. It is so, certainly, with the evidence of Christianity; and we may well rejoice in the fact. Yet just here lies a difficulty. To one who takes a general survey of the immense domain of Christian apologetics, and especially to one who attempts to grapple with some of the more labored and complicated demonstrations

of the truth of revelation, the questions very naturally occur, Is all this necessary to the establishment of a rational belief? Or, if there be a simpler argument, is the conviction justly springing from it of a grade essentially inferior to that which can be reached only by following out the more extended demonstrations, and testing, by reference to original authorities, the validity of each step in the process? With what propriety can it be so emphatically affirmed, that "to the poor the gospel is preached," if the highest assurance of its truth is thus made the exclusive privilege of a favored few? And the thought is apt to follow, Surely, if Christianity had been from God, convincing evidence of its truth would have been brought within the reach of all who were willing honestly to weigh its claims.

Now, this difficulty I wish to meet by showing that the essential evidence of the truth of Christianity requires for its due appreciation no deep research; that it is very simple and very plain; that Christ himself, as exhibited in the Gospels, and occupying the position he indisputably does in the history of the world, is his own sufficient and conclusive argument.

The position taken in respect to the evidences of Christianity by what claims to be the most advanced thought of the age has given peculiar value to this form of proof; and it is not, probably, too much to say, that more has been done for its development within the last thirty years than during all the preceding centuries of the Christian era. Even now, perhaps, the subject has hardly been more than entered upon. Volumes, indeed, have been writ-

ten on it, awakening, some of them, an interest almost unprecedented in the history of literature. Yet, as inquiry advances, new openings are presented on all sides into boundless reaches which are still to be explored. For, when we speak of the argument from the life and character of Jesus as simple and easily apprehended, it is not to be inferred that it is one easily exhausted. It is simple in the sense that the humblest reader of the Gospels may thoroughly feel its power; yet, in a sense, it is extremely complex, and admits of unlimited analysis. The case of a plain man seeking with a truly honest heart, and with some measure of religious sensibility, to estimate for himself the trustworthiness of the evangelical accounts, may be compared to that of one thoroughly alive to the loveliness of Nature, yet of little general cultivation, who looks out upon some such prospect as that of the Bay of Naples is said to be. His eye takes in at a single view the glory of the scene; and the effect it has upon him is visible in every feature of his face. If you ask him to tell you what he finds there, he will point out, perhaps, a few of the prominent features of the landscape, but will soon lose himself in general expressions of his admiration. Let a Ruskin take the same post of observation. Give him time enough, and where will he stop in his enumeration of the elements that constitute the beauty of the picture? Give him time enough, and he will exhaust upon each one of them the vocabulary of a language, and will fill a library with the description. Yet, after all, he will only have described, and that but very imperfectly at best, just what the child of Nature saw and felt at once.

It is possible, that even in the brief sketch of the argument from the character and life of Jesus, which is all that I shall attempt, some things may be suggested which it will be thought are not likely to occur as matter of distinct consciousness to such a reader of the Gospels as I profess to have in view; yet let it not be hastily inferred that I have transgressed the limits I have set myself. The argument might be indefinitely expanded, and, after all, involve nothing more than lies upon the face of the Gospel narrative; nothing more than what every candid and attentive reader, possessing common power of apprehension, more or less sensibly feels the force of, though he may not be able always clearly to trace the process by which his conviction has been reached.

In the accounts of the four evangelists, there are presented to us fragments of the biography of one, who, at the time of his death, had not yet entered upon middle age. With the exception of a few paragraphs contributed by two of the narrators, and relating to circumstances connected with his birth, his infancy, and childhood, the history, as gathered from all the four, relates to the closing period of his life, — a period comprising, according to the most probable computation, only about three years and a half. Within this period, however, lay the whole of his public work; and, in the brief and simple record of it, Jesus of Nazareth is set before us, as to all the essential features of his character and life and plan, more distinctly and vividly than any other personage whom history commemorates.

The first thing which strikes us as we examine the record is the surprising nature of his claims. He

claims to be not only a sinless man, but the Son of God, and one with God, and that in such a sense that all men are bound to honor him even as they honor God. He claims to be the Redeemer, King, and Head of the human race, the immediate Source and constant Maintainer of spiritual life wherever it is possessed, and the final Judge of the world.

Now, let us suppose, for a moment, that the four Gospels have no existence; and let us suppose the problem given to construct, by the aid of imagination merely, a history which shall correspond in its minuteness with that given in the Gospels, and throughout consistently exhibit the daily life of one maintaining such exalted claims, and acting in accordance with them. Who would not pronounce the task to be impossible, as involving conditions, which, if not absolutely incompatible with one another, were yet so far beyond the range of human experience as to be reached and mastered by no conceivable effort of human genius? Yet such a history exists; and the mere fact of its existence is a sufficient vindication of its truth. The picture of the life and character of Jesus, exhibited in the Gospels with the utmost minuteness and variety of detail compatible with the briefness of the record, accords most fully with the claims he is represented as advancing.

My limits will not allow me to trace even the outlines of that wondrous life, to attempt even the most general analysis of the varied forms of moral excellence which it displays. Suffice it to say, that the impression all but universally produced by the evangelical history, in all ages and countries where it has been made known, is, that the character and life which

it records are absolutely free from blemish. Strange as it may seem, this has been the impression generally received even by those who have refused to admit the astonishing claims which are necessarily involved in any fair interpretation of the language of Jesus; and it only shows how conclusive must be that evidence of sinlessness which thus commands assent even when associated with self-exalting assertions, which, had they been advanced by any other human being, would have been justly regarded as the extreme of blasphemous presumption.

Among the most remarkable of the attestations borne by unbelievers to the loftiness of the moral character of Jesus is the oft-cited language of Renan. Compelled, in order to maintain his fundamental principle, that there can be no such thing as a miracle, to resort to the supposition of an almost enforced participation, on the part of Jesus, in what, according to his view, was nothing more nor less than a series of impostures, he yet avouches his conviction, "that, whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed; that his worship will grow young without ceasing; and that all ages will proclaim, that, among the sons of men, there is none born greater than Jesus."

The substantial correctness of the Gospel narrative is beyond a reasonable doubt. In the well-known words of another celebrated unbeliever, "It is more inconceivable that four men should have agreed to forge this book than it is that one alone should have furnished the subject of it. . . . The gospel," he continues, "bears marks of truth so grand, so striking, so perfectly inimitable, that the inventor of it

would be a more astonishing character than the hero."

The only question that can be raised is, What are we to think of the claims which Jesus is represented as advancing? And the only difficulty in the way of the full admission of these claims lies in the assumption, that miracles are impossible. But, rejecting the claims, we are far enough from getting rid of miracles. We find ourselves confronted by a series of phenomena as completely inexplicable by the established laws of the human mind as the resurrection of Lazarus is by natural law, — phenomena isolated from one another or inextricably perplexed, often mutually contradictory, and all pointing to no end. The enigmas presented are not enigmas only to the unlearned: they have never been unravelled, and they are such as every earnest and candid thinker feels to be beyond the power of learning to unravel. Admit the one miracle of the incarnation, and where before were countless miracles, arbitrary, discordant, aimless, we see everywhere connection, order, harmony, and purpose. Every thing now becomes comparatively plain. Only so much of mystery remains as that the absence of it, upon the supposition of that one fact, would be the greatest mystery of all. Under such circumstances, is not implicit faith the dictate of the highest reason?

To the same conclusion we are irresistibly compelled when we come to regard Jesus as a teacher of moral and religious truth. And here I may assume, as something admitted on all hands, the essential correctness of the accounts we have in respect to his outward circumstances, his humble parentage, the

place where his youth was spent, and his early occupation. So, too, the genuineness, in the main, of the utterances ascribed to him, — at least, by the three synoptists,[1] — may be regarded as beyond dispute. Jesus wrote nothing, dictated nothing; made no provision, as far as we know, for his instructions to be written out. None of them were written, that we know of, for years after his death. Yet such is the originality of his style of thought and expression, that the boldest criticism does not venture to call in question the substantial authenticity of the words ascribed to him by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Never was the line more distinctly drawn than here between the style of the historian and that of the discourses which he professes to report. For myself, I am fully persuaded, that, even upon grounds of the most rigid criticism, the authenticity of John's Gospel is equally well established with that of the other three. Yet, as it must be admitted that it is not always easy to distinguish between his own language and that which he ascribes to his Master, I am willing, for the purposes of the present argument, to confine myself to the teachings of Jesus as recorded by the others. Nothing can be more unsystematic than the shape and manner in which these teachings were ordinarily conveyed. Rarely put into the form of continuous discourse, imparted sometimes in familiar conversation with a single person, or a few at most, and called forth by particular inquiries, or by circum-

[1] It may not be altogether needless to say that this word has lately come into general use among biblical scholars, as a designation of the first three evangelists, with reference to the fact of their exhibiting pretty much the same series of accounts pertaining to the life of Jesus; while John, devoting little space, comparatively, to what is related by the rest, occupies himself mainly with those portions of the history which they have omitted.

stances incidentally occurring, they consist very much of parables, and short, pregnant, pointed apothegms, commanding attention, stimulating thought, awakening inquiry, and fixing themselves in the memory with a force such as the words of no other teacher either before or since have ever possessed. Rules of conduct are not unfrequently found among them, which every one sees at a glance are incapable of being literally carried into practice. Statements occur, which, though unlimited in form, carry on their face the necessity of limitation. But everywhere the principle inculcated is beyond dispute; and the hold which it takes upon the mind is all the deeper from the fact that the hearer or the reader is obliged, in a sense, to work it out for himself from the concrete form in which it is presented.

The sum total of the words of Jesus, collected out of the different evangelists, may be read in the course of a few hours; and they contain hardly an expression which was not probably in familiar use among the men of his own time. Yet few, brief, simple, scattered as they are, they compose a body of moral teaching, embracing principles which cover the whole ground of human obligation. One spirit pervades the whole, — a spirit that is even more distinctly illustrated by the example of the Master than his words express it; and whoever has once thoroughly imbibed this spirit carries within him a guide which it is always safe to follow.

I do not insist here that any one of the principles taught by Jesus was absolutely new to the world. It is affirmed by some that Jesus taught nothing in respect to human duty which was never taught before.

I believe the statement capable of being shown to be essentially untrue: but, of its truth or falsehood, the ordinary reader has not the means of confidently judging for himself; and I wish here to make no assertion which it requires learning to verify. But that the teachings of Jesus comprise a perfect system of morals is what it lies within the reach of all to be assured of; and the fact that the assailants of Christianity have never been able to find such a system in any other quarter is evidence sufficient that no such system is elsewhere to be found.

Nor is there any room to question that the great features of this system, whether absolutely new to the world or not, were strictly original as announced by Jesus. No one will imagine that he could have borrowed any thing from Confucius or Sakhya Mouni or the Greek philosophers. Even if it could be shown that all that is essential to the moral system Jesus taught may be found in scattered fragments here and there among the sayings ascribed to other teachers, who, in previous ages and far-off nations, had made extraordinary use of that inward light which lighteth every man, this would detract nothing from the claims of Him who alone has embodied in his teachings the sum of human duty, and, still more grandly alone, has exemplified it in his life.

Take, now, the case as it stands. Here is a scheme of morals and religion resting upon, and in every particular thoroughly conformed to, such views of the holiness of God, his spirituality and fatherhood, and of the common brotherhood of man, as the largest and profoundest thought of all subsequent ages has been unable to improve, and such as it is compelled

to acknowledge final and exhaustive. The originator of this scheme, so comprehensive in its spirit, equally adapted to every age and country, and commending itself with sovereign authority to all the best feelings of mankind everywhere, is one himself wholly untaught by any human teacher; a young man brought up in penury and seclusion, trained to daily manual labor in one of the most despised neighborhoods of a remote and petty dependency of the Roman Empire, and belonging to a race, which, at the time of his appearance, was generally characterized by the prevalence of a religious formalism, seemingly as impervious to all just views of the divine requirements as pagan idolatry itself, and of a blind pride of nationality, a narrow and bigoted exclusiveness, which gave too much occasion for the reproach cast upon them by a great heathen writer of the generation following, of being the enemies of every other portion of the human family.

Now, I will not attempt, as some have done, to argue directly the divinity of Jesus from the unequalled intellectual and moral opulence displayed in his teachings and his life. But, in our efforts to penetrate the mystery which surrounds him, it is certainly incumbent upon us, first of all, to seek for light in the account he gives us of himself. What was the general nature of his claims is certain. It is impossible that the statement of them should have been materially modified after his crucifixion by the growing veneration in which his memory was held. They are so intimately interwoven with the whole tenor of his teachings, that, admitting what no criticism calls in question, we can stop nowhere short of

the admission that Jesus claimed divine honors for himself. As little can we resort to the supposition, that, in so doing, he was under the control of an innocent self-delusion. If there ever was a sound human intellect, clear, well-balanced, and raised above every influence that could disturb or cloud its operation, it was the intellect displayed in the recorded life of Jesus of Nazareth. The only alternative that remains to us is, either to accept him for what he declares himself to be, or to ascribe to him, without any qualification, the boldest, the most arrogant, the most blasphemous, of all impostures, yet an imposture steadily directed to the promotion of the highest style of goodness, and connected with a life, which, except upon this revolting supposition, is a life of sinless perfection, and the only such life that has ever been lived on earth.

It is freely admitted that the acceptance of the claims of Jesus is the acceptance of a transcendent mystery. But upon any other ground that can be taken, instead of a mystery, we have a monstrosity; and it is only one of the innumerable features which place that monstrosity beyond the limits of the possible, that it would stand in irreconcilable contradiction to those laws which we cannot help acknowledging as among the highest and the most stable in the universe, — the laws which govern the growth and manifestation of moral good and evil.

Believe in the existence of such a moral anomaly who can. The conscience and reason of mankind, in view of all the facts pertaining to the teachings and the life of Jesus, and unbiassed by indefensible assumptions, will concur in the unhesitating verdict, "Surely this was the Son of God!"

But no less forcibly does the evidence of the divine mission of Jesus present itself in the light of what he has actually accomplished as the founder of a moral empire. He claimed, as we have seen, to be a king; and his kingdom was one to be established by himself, — a kingdom absolutely unique in its conception, — a kingdom of righteousness, bounded by no territorial limits, but embracing all, in every land and age, who should be willing, in his own words, to take his yoke upon them, and to learn of him. If the boldness of the conception is amazing, more amazing still, if possible, is the quiet assurance with which the young carpenter of Nazareth anticipated its becoming fact. "I," he declared, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Now, were there nothing more to be said than simply that his anticipations have been realized as far as this, that the civilization of the world began within three centuries from his crucifixion to be professedly a Christian civilization; that it is so to-day, and has been mainly ever since; that, in all nations above the line of semi-barbarism, his law is to-day the acknowledged standard of right, and in his name, professedly at least, kings reign, and princes decree justice; that, through influences going forth from him, whole races of men have been brought up from the depths of savage life, while the annals of all time may be searched in vain for the record of such a change accomplished by any other agency; and, in a word, that every step of substantial moral progress that has ever been taken since his time in the history of mankind has had its origin in his teachings, — were nothing more to be said than this, the fact that the confidence of Jesus in his

own destined sovereignty among mankind has been even so far justified, would be of itself enough to warrant the admission of his claims. The position which Jesus confessedly occupies in the general history of the world since the time of his appearance is a position which its whole preceding history, rightly understood, is seen to have been a preparation for his taking, and for his thus becoming, as he is, the central figure of all ages. Is it conceivable that such a position can have been allotted by an overruling Providence, or even by blind chance, to an impostor or a fanatic, or a being that never existed but in fiction?

But the plans and the anticipations of Jesus in respect to the empire he was to establish have been realized in a far higher sense than this. It may well be doubted whether he ever contemplated the gathering of the nations to himself as nations. His kingdom was to be established primarily in the hearts of individual men. It was to men in their individual capacity that the call was addressed to become his subjects, to love him with a supreme affection, and to take his life of labor and sacrifice for the good of others as the model of their own. It was in their individual capacity that men were to be brought under the constraining influence of his love as manifested in giving his life a ransom for many, and were encouraged in all their efforts to become like him by the assurance, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

In whatever part of the world the words of Jesus have been made known, there have always been found hearts ready to receive them; and to these they have become the medium of a new life. A new style of character has come into existence, — a

character to which nothing more than a distant approximation has ever been witnessed in lands unvisited by revelation, and even that but rarely, — a character the controlling element of which is supreme love to Christ, and love to man for Christ's sake, and which is uniformly referred, by all in whom it is exhibited, to the power of Christ working in them.

This character, in its distinctive features and in its practical manifestation, is essentially the same in every land, and has been so in every generation. The personal experience connected with it is corroborated by the testimony of millions upon millions, living and dead, representing every century, every race of men, every grade of cultivation, every form and aspect of human life; millions upon millions agreeing oftentimes in nothing else; strangely refusing sometimes even to acknowledge the claims of one another, and, more strangely still, misunderstanding one another sometimes so far as to stand in mutual hostility; yet all agreeing in this one thing, — the spirit of loving trust in Jesus, and of hearty obedience to his law.

It involves no real abatement of the force of the argument, that the empire of Jesus, viewed in this light, has included thus far but a small proportion of the human family. With all his confidence in the ultimate and universal triumph of his kingdom, the Master anticipated, and most clearly predicted, that its progress would be slow. Nor is the argument weakened by the admitted fact, that, of those who make the most unreserved professions of personal allegiance to him, great numbers are manifestly destitute of all participation in his spirit. As illus-

trating the parable of the tares and the wheat, even this only furnishes new proof of the divine prescience of Jesus.

It is a circumstance more deserving of consideration from its supposed tendency to weaken the force of the argument from the empire of Jesus established in the hearts of individual believers, and exhibited in their lives, that, particularly in more recent years, that interest in human welfare, and that self-denying devotion to its furtherance, which have been long regarded as the exclusive glory of Christianity, have been sometimes exhibited in an eminent degree by those who fail to recognize in Jesus any thing more than a merely human teacher. But not to raise the question here, how far it is conceivable that a true participation of the Master's spirit may co-exist with essentially defective views of his person and his work, it is enough to say, that, wherever there is displayed any marked resemblance to his character without the circle of those who own him as their Lord, the most rational as well as the readiest explanation of its origin is found, either directly or indirectly, in his all-pervading influence. The fact remains, that a kingdom has been built up in human hearts, — a kingdom containing all the elements of permanence, and fitted to be universal, — a kingdom corresponding in its nature to that which Jesus professedly undertook to found, and of which he so confidently announced the final triumph.

True, the existence of such a kingdom, invisible and purely spiritual, limited as yet in its extent, advancing at best but slowly, and sometimes hardly seeming to advance at all, makes a less sensible

appeal to a merely worldly imagination, and the argument which it supplies is less adapted, upon a superficial view, to produce conviction of the divine authority of its Founder, than the dominion which he holds as the nominally recognized Sovereign of nations. But it needs only to consider the obstacles which have been surmounted in the progress of his kingdom hitherto to be assured that there is no lack of power with him to fulfil his promise and his pledge of making it ultimately embrace the world. In view of what has been actually wrought, and of events which are at present passing, it now demands immeasurably less faith to anticipate the full realization of all that is implied in the predictions of the universal reign of Christ, as something to be brought about in the existing line of the divine administration of affairs on earth, than would have been required eighteen hundred years ago to believe in the destined accomplishment of what we all see and know to have been accomplished; and wherever there is taken a comprehensive survey of human history, and due weight allowed to it, and, above all, wherever there is a heart alive in any just measure to its own moral wants and the moral wants of man, the evidence furnished here commends itself as an evidence inferior to no other, even in its power to satisfy the reason, that Jesus is the Son of God.

The course of argument which has been thus briefly indicated takes nothing for granted that is capable of being reasonably called in question. Nothing has been assumed in respect to the authorship of the Gospel history, nothing in respect to its inspiration or the perfect accuracy of its details,

nothing in respect even to its antiquity beyond what is universally admitted. No reference has been made to the miracles of Jesus as an independent evidence of his claims. They have only been incidentally referred to as contributing to make up that picture of a life of unparalleled beneficence which carries in itself the proof of having been drawn from actual reality. Nothing more has been assumed in regard to miracles than simply that they are not impossible; and the validity of this assumption is essentially involved in the admission of the being of a God. The general argument, as it has been already stated, is not a new one. It has often been presented, and in a great variety of forms. It has never been refuted. No reply has ever been made to it, which, among those who recognize in any proper sense the being of a God, has been regarded, except within a very narrow circle, as possessing even a show of plausibility. All attempts to set it aside have thus far resulted only in the clearer manifestation of its strength.

If any are disposed to ask, "Why, then, repeat here what has been so often and better said before?" my justification is to be found not so much in what has now been said as in what has been left unsaid. As the argument is commonly presented, much is introduced which must be received on trust; and the convincing force of the facts and considerations which are self-evident is apt to be impaired by their being associated with others requiring a confirmation which is not within the reach of all. I have studiously endeavored to eliminate from the argument every thing that admits of question, though at the risk of

its presentation appearing somewhat bald and meagre in comparison with what some may think it might easily have been made. My simple object has been to show, that, in what every one may assuredly *know* of Jesus, there is ample ground for yielding him full and boundless trust.

But some one, perhaps, may here reply, "The argument, after all, establishes positively nothing more than a kind of historical certainty at most; and the truths I am required to receive are such as, from their very nature, in order to command my assent, must be brought home to me with an entirely different kind of certainty." The feeling of this difficulty, I apprehend, springs, in great part, from the undue prominence which the Church has commonly assigned to that element in faith which is purely intellectual. But let me say to any one who finds himself embarrassed by it, The teachings of Jesus, at least in respect to moral and religious duty, are such as your moral nature must assent to with absolute assurance. Just yield yourself, then, fully to those teachings, and the promise will be fulfilled to you: "If any man is willing to do the will of God, he shall *know* of the doctrine." In making a legitimate use of the certainty you have, you will come to possess the certainty you crave.

I have said that the argument that has been pursued assumes nothing in regard to the inspiration of the Gospels. But, the divine mission of Jesus being once admitted, it is but reasonable to suppose that special provision may have been made to secure the transmission to the world of a perfectly reliable account of his life and teachings. And the testimony of

so many of the sacred writers to their own inspiration, regarded from this point of view, merely as the testimony of ordinary men, is entitled to great confidence. The more closely we study their writings, the more convincing does the evidence appear that they were specially called to their work, and fitted for it, and guided in it. In like manner, the testimony which is borne by the writers of the New Testament to the inspiration of the Old finds abundant confirmation not only in the unequalled grandeur of many portions of the latter, but in the general structure of the whole, forming as it does an organism, and thus disclosing the agency of one controlling Mind, engaged in carrying out a plan of which it is not possible that the individual writers, acting independently of any higher influence, and scattered along through so many centuries, should have had any other than the most remote conception.

That the authors of the various writings that make up our Bible were guided, in general, by a divine influence differing in kind from that enjoyed by any other writers whose works have been transmitted to the present time, and that the Bible thus stands alone in its authority among all other books, may justly be held with unwavering confidence. But what precisely was the nature of this inspiration, how far it precluded the influence of human infirmity and limitation, and whether it is to be recognized as operating in the same way in all the books of the Bible, and in every part of every book, are questions upon which good and wise men have always been divided, and upon which there is room for honest diversity of opinion. Inspiration is essen-

tially miraculous; and the principle of economy in the employment of miraculous agency, which is often so conspicuous in the sacred narrative, — and which, by the way, is among the incidental indications of its authenticity, — is full of suggestion here. And it needs only a very limited survey of what is incontestably the course of Divine Providence to show how unsafe it is to make our own conceptions of what it is necessary or desirable for God to do a ground of assumption as to what he has actually done.

It is hardly conceivable that any truly fair-minded man, after a thorough investigation of all the data that are to be taken into account in forming an opinion upon this subject, should be able to rest in any very definite theory of inspiration with a degree of confidence even approaching that which he is entitled to feel in the divine authority of Jesus, and in the truths immediately connected with that central fact. Yet how often do we hear men say, "Why, the moment we admit the possibility of a doubt as to the perfect accuracy of any statement of the Bible, we find ourselves at once afloat upon an ocean of uncertainty, and we know not what to believe"! Now, I cannot help thinking, indeed I feel assured, that those who talk in this way often have a better foundation for their faith than they seem to know of. But, if what they say is strictly true, what does their faith amount to? To say nothing of the mournful destitution of all genuine spiritual experience and insight necessarily implied in the declaration, if admitted to be strictly true, their only protection against making utter shipwreck of belief is simple ignorance, — an ignorance which a little gleam of light, incautiously

let in, may at any time scatter in a moment; for they have only to begin to inquire in sober, candid earnest, in order to find, that, whatever may be the truth in relation to the subject, there is no such absolute certainty attainable in respect to it as they hold to be essential to their believing any thing.

Language is inadequate to set forth as it deserves the pernicious folly of the position attempted to be held by some, — that the very idea of a written revelation implies, of necessity, the direct communication to the writers, from above, of every word to be employed. The most malignant attacks upon the Bible have probably done less towards unsettling faith, and confirming unbelief, than the well-meant treatises on inspiration, in which it is maintained that the truth of Christianity itself must stand or fall with the doctrine, that every word of the Bible was written under a guidance that absolutely excluded all mistake.

It is not to be denied, that, in the re-action against such unwise and untenable positions, some recent writers of high authority, while still defending strenuously all that is essential to Christianity, have been too ready to concede the historical inaccuracy of certain scriptural statements upon minor points. Due reverence for Scripture requires that all possible pains should be taken honestly to vindicate the accuracy of every thing which it contains. All honor to those who have undertaken the defence of the Pentateuch against Colenso, and who have so triumphantly exposed the shallowness of his learning and the weakness of his logic! But better, a thousand times better, that his objections should be left unanswered, than that they should be refuted in such a way as to

convey the impression that the admission of a doubt as to any of the details of the Mosaic history must sap the foundation of all just confidence in the Christian revelation.

The leading facts in the history of the Jewish nation are as much beyond dispute as the general course of events in our late civil war; and the progress of discovery, from time to time, is continually narrowing the circle within which there is even supposed to be any room for doubt. But, to one who takes a correct view of the whole subject, it is always painful to hear any new discovery spoken of as confirming the truth of revelation. The truth of revelation needs no confirmation; and within the sphere of external evidence, to all intents and purposes, it is incapable of confirmation. The confirmation of a minute historical statement of the Bible is no more a confirmation of the truth of revelation than the breath we every moment draw is a confirmation of the doctrine of the atmosphere. If we can suppose such a case as that, by some wonderful series of discoveries, the truth of every historical detail both of the Old Testament and of the New should be established beyond a doubt, the additional confirmation which would thus be given to the truth of the Christian revelation would at most, according to any just estimate, amount to nothing more than the difference between a million and a million and one.

If the course of reasoning I have pursued be valid, the inference follows, — and it is one which cannot be too earnestly insisted on, — that the ultimate evidence of Christianity is entirely independent of all questions as to the inspiration of the sacred writings; as to

their authorship, and freedom from interpolations; and as to what books are to be included in the canon; independent, in fact, of every thing which can be regarded as being still matter for critical inquiry. Though we were to concede every thing which the most audacious criticism, merely as criticism, aside from what are purely atheistic assumptions, claims to have established, or can be imagined capable of establishing in the future, the essential proof of Christianity would remain unimpaired. I do not say these things to prepare the way for the admission of any of the pretended results of the destructive criticism of recent times; but I put the matter thus strongly — though, I am sure, not more strongly than the truth allows — with a view to the relief of many who are sometimes perplexed with difficulties which they cannot dispose of to their perfect satisfaction, while yet, as long as those difficulties are not fairly met, they do not see exactly how they can justify either to themselves or others the confidence which they still cherish in the Christian revelation.

The thought, I am aware, is likely to be suggested here, that revelation is of value only for the truths which it contains; and the question may be asked, "How are we to arrive at any certainty in respect to the doctrines which constitute the system of Christianity, except upon the basis of an unqualified acceptance of the strictest theory of inspiration?" But I ask, in reply, How do we become assured of the doctrine of inspiration? Most certainly we are not at liberty to assume the truth of this doctrine in order that we may have inspired authority upon which to rest our assurance of it. But if this great

fundamental doctrine, as it is so commonly regarded, is itself capable of being established without our first assuming it to be true, what is there essential to Christianity which may not in like manner be established independently of the same assumption? If we accept Paul's statement simply as that of a trustworthy man, that he received his knowledge of Christian doctrine by revelation, why might we not in the same way, and with equal confidence, accept his statement as to what that doctrine is? How much more, then, having, as we do have, ample reason to believe that he was divinely guided to express with infallible precision the doctrinal truth revealed to him, may we still maintain unshaken confidence in all his teachings, even though compelled to admit the existence of a remote possibility, that either in respect to the personal expectation he expresses in Acts xx. 25, or to that in Phil. i. 25, he may have been mistaken!

The truth of Christianity once admitted, belief in inspiration, as we have seen, would seem to follow almost as a matter of necessity; and any just conception of inspiration must imply, at the very least, that those who enjoyed it are worthy of all confidence as the expounders of religious truth. But, in addition to the guaranty thus furnished to our faith, the fundamental doctrines of the Christian revelation, as accepted by the great body of believers, are so intimately connected with one another, that one who has truly taken the first step in belief will ordinarily feel little need of evidence for what remains to be received. The amazing fact of the incarnation of the Son of God, which we are constrained to accept as furnishing the only rational explanation

of a history the truth of which cannot be denied, finds its only adequate complement in just that scheme of doctrine which the Scriptures plainly teach in respect to the moral exigencies of the human race, the redemption accomplished for it by the sacrifice of Calvary, the methods by which that sacrifice is made availing, and the infinite loss involved in its rejection.

The general current of thought is, to all appearance, fast bringing men to feel, that, for those who are willing to receive any thing as true for which they have not the direct evidence of the senses, there is nowhere any tenable position short of the substantial acceptance of these truths. The struggle to maintain a precarious foothold somewhere else cannot be very long persisted in. The difficulties of the effort are continually multiplying, and the ultimate abandonment of the whole middle ground between Atheism and Christianity may be looked upon as certain.

Upon minor points connected with the details of Christian truth, the form in which it is held and the explanations given of it, there has always been, and there always will be, a diversity of views. Vain is the hope of securing any thing like absolute uniformity of doctrine by precise theories of inspiration, artificial canons of interpretation, or minute dogmatic formulas. Christianity is essentially a law of liberty in thought as well as in life; and the only security against the corruptions to which it is liable in both these aspects is one and the same, — the general diffusion of a deep inward experience of its reality and power.

If it is a truth of prime value in its place, and

never to be lost sight of, that "the Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants," no less essential and pregnant is the truth, that the spirit of Jesus is the religion of Christians. An infallible Bible without an infallible interpreter is no security against doctrinal aberrations without limit. But in the spirit of Jesus we have the infallible interpreter we need. Wherever this is clearly found, there is and must be all essential truth. And this spirit, ever consistent with itself, may be confidently relied upon to maintain, throughout all coming time, whatever is truly distinctive in that great harmonious scheme of doctrine which the Church, as a body, following its guidance, has never ceased to hold: "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; . . . but a stranger will they not follow.*"

In the meanwhile, let Christian believers dismiss forever those groundless fears of danger to the faith which have been so long the reproach of the Christian name. Nothing can be more significant of the general failure to discern the true grounds of confidence in revelation than the prevailing jealousy in respect to the possible results of speculative thought and of scientific investigation. Take, for example, the apprehensions which are often expressed by men of some intelligence in ordinary matters as to the effect which may be produced even by making known the facts in relation to the various readings of the manuscripts of the New Testament, and the grounds there are for questioning the genuineness of particular passages. Even the defects of our common English version must not be pointed out, nor the necessity insisted upon of a revision which

may embody the results of the progress that has been made in biblical learning for the last two centuries and a half, lest the popular faith should be unsettled. If the popular faith is capable of being so easily unsettled, then, by all means, let it be unsettled from the sandy basis upon which it rests, and be put upon a basis such that no increase of knowledge can ever unsettle it again. Let the policy which would check investigation in any quarter, or cover up any of its ascertained conclusions, be left, hereafter, to those who have some reason to dread the light. Let encouragement be given to the most thorough researches in every department of knowledge; and let all new truth, as fast as it is discovered, be proclaimed upon the house-top: but let it also be proclaimed, and let men be made to see and to feel that it is so, that the truth of Christianity rests upon a basis which no conceivable discovery in any branch of science can possibly affect; that it is proof against every thing short of what it is certain that science can never furnish, — an absolute and overwhelming demonstration that there is no God.

In conclusion, I have only to add, that the part allotted to the Church in the subjugation of the world to Christ must lie very much — perhaps I might say entirely, at the last analysis — in compelling men to feel the power of the great argument, which, in its outlines, I have endeavored this evening to present; the argument which is found in the character and life of Christ himself, — in what he was, and what he said, and what he did, while dwelling in the flesh; in all the results he has since accomplished; in the work he is achieving now. So

far as preaching is concerned, he is the best preacher who can most effectually do just this. I trust I shall not be charged with underrating the value of learning as a means of furthering the moral and religious advancement of the world: it can hardly be supposed that the pursuits to which my life has been devoted have had any tendency to lead to such an error. But I wish here to express my deep conviction, that no wide range of learning is essential to the attainment of the highest success in the ministry of the gospel. God, by his providence, seems to be making necessary the general employment of a class of laborers differing, in some respects, from those whom our churches have felt themselves mainly called upon to rear. A thoroughly learned ministry, adequate in numbers to the world's demands for religious teaching, it is vain to attempt to furnish. Nor is there really any imperative need of such a ministry for the work at large. It is wholly a mistake to imagine that the unexampled array of learning and dialectical skill which characterizes the modern assaults upon Christianity has created a demand for any thing corresponding among the generality of those who undertake to defend it. So far as these assaults are such as can be repelled by learning only, they do not even strike at any thing that is vital to the evidence of Christianity; and, so far as they rest on speculation, they find their most effectual refutation in the testimony of our moral nature.

There is room enough, indeed, in the field of labor occupied by the Christian ministry, for the profitable employment of the richest mental culture and the most profound and varied learning; and it is justly

and urgently demanded, that, within the ranks of the ministry, such culture and such learning should be found. There are many portions of Scripture the true meaning of which can be approached only through an accurate acquaintance with the languages in which they were originally written, combined with a good knowledge of the times in which the writers lived, and of the whole history of biblical interpretation. Then, too, if it is a worthy and ennobling pursuit to investigate the laws of Nature, to study the revolutions of empires and the growth of nations, how much more so to explore, as far as may be, the bearings of those truths pertaining to immortality which are made known or intimated in revelation, and to follow the progress, through the ages that are past, of that kingdom which is to endure forever! And it is of unspeakable importance that provision should be made whereby devout and gifted minds may be enabled, in every sphere of research, to go on, if possible, far in advance of those who are disposed to employ each step of progress as a new vantage-ground from which to assail the truth of revelation. Still it must never be forgotten that the main work of the ministry is to lead the world to Christ. And, in order to be led to Christ, the world needs to hear of him from those to whom the history of his life has become a living, ever-present, all-controlling reality; men who can say to their divine Teacher, "*Thy words were found, and I did eat them;*" men in whose daily lives his own life is reproduced, and who, in speaking of him, speak as of one whom they have seen and known, — yea, whom they are daily beholding face to face.

John Bunyans, rather than John Seldens, are the great need of all times; and are as much, at least, demanded in our own day of universal inquiry and fast-advancing light as ever. Bunyan, the illiterate and rude, with his profound Christian experience and his strong common sense, but with a little broadening of his views, would be no contemptible antagonist to the strongest of the modern champions of unbelief. Such men as he was can well afford to dispense with very much which the accepters of revelation, alike with its rejecters, have too commonly regarded as essential to its defence. When pressed with any argument which cannot be met by an appeal to sound common sense and the moral constitution of an honest man, they may boldly reply to their opposers, "We are not careful to answer your objections. Let them stand. Our faith rests upon a rock that lies below their reach. Whatever difficulties they involve are nothing to be compared with the difficulties you must encounter in the attempt to set aside the claims of Jesus. Here are the facts in regard to him; unique, stupendous; beyond controversy, facts; and challenging explanation as well at your hands as at ours. We undertake to explain them; and the view we take, while it involves no assumptions which you can demonstrate to be false, brings all the facts into harmony with one another as perfectly as the movements of the planets are harmonized in the system of Copernicus. Till you can bring another explanation which will do the same thing, you are bound to accept ours."

But, after all, it is not by preaching alone, nor mainly, that the argument we have been speaking

of is to be urged upon the world. The lives and labors of Christ's own little ones everywhere, sharing his spirit, copying his example of self-denying beneficence, and silently testifying to all around them of the continued exercise of his divine might and of the continued progress of his kingdom, must be the great, standing enforcement of it. And if so much has been accomplished by this agency hitherto, under all the disadvantages created by the widespread domination of ignorance and self-seeking and sectarian zeal, what may not be expected from its working in that Church of the Future, which prophecy long ago foreshadowed, and the grand form of which, projected on Faith's horizon, though as yet but dimly seen, is growing more and more distinct with each succeeding year! What changes may come ere the edifice attains the full perfection of its majestic beauty; how much of the old scaffolding of creeds and organizations will be wholly taken down and thrown away; how much is to be finally worked in, and so made still of use as a portion of the finished structure, — it were yet premature to attempt to say. I venture upon no enumeration of the aisles and chapels and crypts and niches of that vast cathedral. But this I am sure of, that nothing will be wanting to its completeness, nothing to its harmony; that all that is good and true on earth will find a place in it, and that whatever it includes of evil and of error will be but as the dust upon its pavement; that stably resting on its deep-laid foundations, compact in the order and fitness of its living stones, its walls unblemished by a fracture or a stain, and reflecting in every part the glory of its Builder, it will stand

forth before the universe as ONE, a worthy realization of one eternal plan, one principle of holy, self-sacrificing love pervading and vitalizing all its worship, and all that might have seemed discord once conspiring to make up the concord of one perpetual anthem of praise and adoration rendered to "THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN."

X.

EXCLUSIVE TRAITS OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY REV. MARK HOPKINS, D.D., LL.D.

WE claim that Christianity differs from other religions, —

1st, In its origin.

Of the origin of the different religions in the world two accounts are given. According to one of these, man had originally the true religion. He was in the moral image of God, and worshipped him acceptably: but he wilfully turned from him; and, having done this, he created gods after his own imagination, and devised forms of worship that might be supposed acceptable to gods thus created.

This is the Bible account. It follows from it that other religions are the product, not simply of imperfection and unavoidable ignorance, but of wickedness. The statement of the apostle Paul is, that, when men "knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and changed the truth of God into a lie;" that "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and that hence they "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator."

The other account is, that the different religions of

the world are the outgrowth of man's religious nature, as the different languages are said to be of his intellectual and emotive nature. Of religions thus originated, some, as Christianity and Mohammedanism, claim to have been given by direct inspiration from God; while others, as Buddhism and Confucianism, make no such claim.

This is the account of Naturalism. According to it, man was not originally in the moral image of God, or in his image at all. As stated by some, he is the only self-conscious product of unconscious forces working upward; and so is himself God, so far as there is a God. According to others, he has been developed from a germ, originally, perhaps, created by God, but at the greatest possible remove from him. But, whatever theory of the origin of man is adopted, it is assumed that he was left to work out his religions from the instincts and cravings and conceptions of his own mind; and that any claim to supernatural aid comes either from self-deception, or from an attempt to deceive others.

Thus viewed, these different religions, so far from being any of them the product of wickedness, are all good for those with whom they have originated. They are the highest possible product of the human mind up to the present time. From the lowest Feticism up to the worship of the sun, all forms of idolatry are but the blind gropings and yearnings of a being ignorant but progressive, and a necessary step in his upward progress.

Of these accounts we adopt the first. Do we, then, say that no religion but that of the Bible is from God, or can be acceptable to him? Yes: we say that not

one of them is capable of rebinding the soul to God, which, according to its etymology, is the proper function of religion; and also, that, as religions, their tendency is to degrade the race.

But, in saying this, do we say that pagan nations, constituting even now more than half the race, are wholly forsaken of God? No. It is not for us to limit God in his methods. His Spirit is abroad in all the earth. Men may be better than their religion. We remember Job and Melchisedec, and the wise men of the East, and Cornelius. We appreciate every pure and elevated moral sentiment, and every noble conception of God, contained in the literature or sacred books of those nations. We think reverently of any aspiration of any soul towards God. We believe, that, in every nation, "he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him." But, believing this, we would not ignore wickedness, and mistake for charity an indiscriminating sentimentalism that vaunts itself as seeing something of good, because something of the religious element, equally in cannibal rites, in the orgies of Bacchus, in the dance of the Israelites around the golden calf, and in the worship of God in spirit and in truth. We believe with an apostle, that "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God." We say that a religion for man must be an acceptable mode of worship for a sinner; that the Bible alone reveals such a mode of worship; and that moral sentiments and sublime conceptions of God are not a religion.

This exclusive claim of Christianity to be from God we simply state. If it can be substantiated, it makes

a difference heaven-wide between that and other religions. That it can be substantiated, we do not doubt; but to do that would require us to go over the whole ground of the Christian evidences as compared with those of other religions, for which this is neither the time nor the place. We pass, therefore, to points that are intrinsic, admitting of immediate comparison; and we say, still under the head of origin, —

That Christianity, as distinguished from Judaism, differs from other religions in growing out of a system which it set aside at the same time that it acknowledged it to be divine. Than this, no problem could be more difficult; and there is nothing in other religions either parallel or analogous to it. As preparation and consummation, as prophecy and fulfilment, as type and antitype, there was needed, and there was, such a correspondence between Christianity and Judaism that its truth might be proved from the Old-Testament Scriptures, while yet it needed to be in utter contrast to Judaism as simple and expansive, and adapted to all men at all times and in all places. That such a correspondence and contrast between two great historical systems should be the result of contrivance, and by Jews, too, in favor of Gentiles, is simply impossible. Nor could it have been the outgrowth of the religious nature. That is primarily one of feeling. It does not grasp great problems, and arrange wide adjustments, and wait for the "fulness of time," and know when its hour has come, and have its miracles ready, and such miracles! and its historical personage, and such a personage! and step forth, as in a moment, from the narrowness of a single people and of a small province to claim the heritage

of the whole earth and of the ages. No. Nothing can rationally account for this but the supposition that it was a divine movement analogous to those in nature by which a lower growth is superseded by a higher. Christianity was the fruit-bearing stalk coming forth from its lower unfolding leaves of Judaism, which it cast off, and left to die.

Again: Christianity differs from other religions in its origin, because that origin is not only from God, but from the *love* of God. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son." Here we have the origin of Christianity as in love; and whether we look at the principle itself, or at the degree and mode of its manifestation, it is wholly unlike any other religion.

Account for it as we may, man has regarded God with terror, and as a Being needing to be placated. In approaching him he has brought offerings and bloody sacrifices, and submitted to penance and self-torture. No heathen, in ancient or modern times, in Pagan or in Christian lands, no philosopher, has risen to the conception of a love of God for man in combination with holiness. Hence the conception of a system as originating, not in himself, but in the self-moved love of a holy God; and a love so great as to correspond with his infinite attributes would not have been possible. In direct contrast with any thing that can be adduced in connection with the origin of other religions is that passage in John, in which we have both the origin and the great characteristic of Christianity: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins."

It has, indeed, been objected to Christianity, that this doctrine of propitiation, or of an atonement, represents God, not as a God of love, but as implacable. Misapprehending the relation of the love of God to the atonement, this objection makes the most wonderful manifestation of that love the ground of a denial that it exists. The true view is, not that the death of Christ made God love the world, but that the coming of Christ, and his whole office, had its inception in the love of God manifesting itself both as compassionate and as holy. It is one thing for compassion to relieve suffering under natural law, and another for mercy to pardon guilt under moral law. The highest manifestation of love is that of a holy being for the guilty. As we exalt the holiness and the sacrifice demanded by it, so, and so only, do we exalt the love; and, when the love itself both provides and makes the sacrifice needed for the pardon and restoration of the guilty, placability emerges from a union of justice with mercy, not as mere compassion, but with a glory that must otherwise have been unknown. It is not, then, those who accept the doctrine of an atonement, but those who deny it, who deny and make impossible the highest manifestation of the love of God.

Having thus seen that Christianity differs from other religions in its origin, — 1st, as from God; 2d, as from a previous divine system which it set aside; and, 3d, as from the love of God, — we now observe, —

2dly, That Christianity not only differs from other religions in its origin, but also in its *essence*.

Originating in love, its essence is love. As a

religion, its essence is love to God. Its first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." If the religion had not originated in love, to obey this command would not have been possible. For the same reason that man could not conceive of a system as originating in the love of God, he could not conceive of a God who was to be loved. Accordingly, his gods have been too remote or indifferent or selfish or hideous to be loved. Would he make his God spiritual? — he became an abstraction. Would he embody him? — he ceased to be a God to the thoughtful, and became an idol to the masses. It was a revelation of love by a God worthy to be loved, and that only, that made love possible: "We love God because he first loved us."

In thus making the love of God its essence as a religion, Christianity has seized on the only possible uniting and harmonizing principle of the spiritual universe. Of this, gravitation in the material universe is but a symbol; and, philosophically, the discovery of that was as nothing compared with the discovery of this. Not in its morality, but in this, — in the union of man to God by love, — is the originality and wonder of the system. He who is thus united to God has all things; he who is not thus united to him has nothing: and the system, be it of religion, or of a philosophy that would take the place of religion, that has not the love of God in it, is a charnel-house of the best affections. It is the only principle through which man can be ennobled by being subject, and be free while he serves, and make sacrifices with a rational joy.

From this principle of love to God, love to man

necessarily flows. Hence the religion naturally flowers out into philanthropic and benevolent institutions. These distinguish it from all others. They are a great feature of it, that might well be dwelt upon if there were time. Hence, too, the religion must draw after it a morality in all directions as rational and as perfect as itself. Everywhere the tendency has been to separate religion from morality; to set them in opposition even: but a religion without morality is a superstition and a curse; and any thing like an adequate and complete morality without religion is impossible. The only salvation for man is in the union of the two as Christianity unites them.

This outgrowth of the morality of Christianity from the religion by their origin in a common principle, together with its perfection, is so a peculiarity of Christianity, that it might well be mentioned under a separate head. It is a great peculiarity, and has not been enough insisted on. Still, being from the same principle, the morality is so much a part of the religion, it so enters into that essence of it of which we are now speaking, that it will suffice to mention it here.

Differing thus from other religions in its origin and essence, we might expect, and we find, that Christianity differs from them, in the third place,

In its END. This end is complex, but is made one by the relation of its parts as implying each other.

As its end, in part, then, and the first step towards its completed end, Christianity, and that alone, proposes the perfection of the individual man.

That Christianity does propose this end is clear. The moral law which it implies, and to the obedience

of which it proposes to bring men back, requires perfection. Christ commanded men to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect; and the apostle Paul made it the end of his preaching to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

In thus proposing perfection as an end, philosophy and reason are in accord. Philosophically, the problem for man is the attainment by him of a perfect manhood. Give us this, and we are content. Any system or method that will give us this, be it religion or philosophy, be it regeneration or culture, we welcome. Failing of this, man is a failure. Not tending towards it, he is out of sympathy with every living thing that grows; and, if the want of this tendency be from any thing but wickedness, he is not only a blot on the universe, but a reproach to his Maker.

But what is the perfection Christianity requires? The divine idea to be realized in man must be that of the moral image of God. This is central. In the kind of faculties which he posesses as rational, free, and moral, man is already in the image of God. What he needs is his moral image, consisting in character. Through this alone can he be brought into harmony with himself, or with any perfect system of moral government. Give us this, and we are content, because we know it will draw after it all else that is desirable. This perfection of the moral nature as that in man which makes him man, as that alone which is possible to all, — this, and this only, does Christianity require. Physical strength, martial prowess, intellectual culture, it passed by at a period when these were in highest repute, because it was to be the universal religion, and these were not possible for all.

Christianity requires moral perfection: and it might be supposed that that would always be identical with itself; but it is not, and we have not yet reached the precise perfection which Christianity would evolve. The perfection of an unfallen being is greatly different from that of one fallen and restored. This last would rest on a new basis, and involve new relations and characteristics. It would be the "perfection which is in Christ Jesus," — a perfection through penitence and humility and meekness and faith; and that is a perfection which no heathen mind ever conceived of, or ever would have conceived of if it had not been exhibited in actual life.

Christianity, then, differs from other religions not only in seeking the perfection of the individual and of his moral nature, which might, perhaps, have been naturally suggested as an end, but in seeking a peculiar perfection which could not have been thus suggested.

In thus commencing with the individual, and working for his perfection as an end in itself, regarding him as having a destiny under the government of God independent of human organizations, Christianity first introduced a principle that is revolutionizing the world. It had been supposed that the individual was for the sake of the government, the organization, the society. Christianity said, "No." If it did not say that governments were for the sake of the individual, it yet gave no heed to them when they would interfere with his moral perfection. It thus established the only democratic principle that is worth any thing, — one that began to turn the world upside down then, and that will never rest till it has done it completely, and

has achieved, through the perfection of the individual, the perfection of society.

This brings us to the second part of the complex end which Christianity proposes, and for which that of the individual is an indispensable condition; that is, the perfection of society.

The perfection of society as an end is as much demanded by reason as that of the individual. It is, indeed, a condition of the full perfection of the individual. Having a social nature, man finds his sphere and scope in society as the bird in the atmosphere; and a perfect society would re-act upon him, and raise him to a perfection impossible without it. Of this demand of the social nature, and of the reciprocal influence of the individual and society, Christ was fully aware. Hence he established a Church, — a community scarcely less original, whether in its objects or methods, than his own divine character. Its objects were, spiritual perfection, and united action in extending the kingdom of God. Its methods were, teaching, the remembrance of Christ in the sacraments, and the establishment of an authority wholly spiritual, with no power of enforcing any exaction, or of punishment except by exclusion from the society. Not only did Christ give no such power: he expressly forbade it. "Ye know," he said, "that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give

his life a ransom for many." These are marvellous words; and a society based upon them, in which humility and self-sacrificing service from love should be the ground of pre-eminence, would be as far removed from ordinary society as a miracle is from the ordinary course of Nature. There is in the conception of it an ideal perfection, that holds the same relation to the perfection of society that the character of Christ does to that of the individual.

Constituted on such a basis, the local church could best perform the functions of a government purely spiritual; but, in the multiplication of such churches, a wide, spiritual community would be formed, the members of which would be related to each other through their common relationship to Christ as their Head and King. Between such there would be the fellowship of love and of mutual helpfulness, and they might act together for wider ends than the local church could compass; but, with reference to such ends, Christ appointed no organization, and gave no authority. If, now, the earth were peopled by those thus related to Christ, and to each other through him, society would be as perfect as the limitations and imperfections of the present state would admit.

But Christianity goes farther. It provides for and looks forward to a perfect corporate life for the whole body of those who receive it. As Bernard says in his "Progress of Christian Doctrine," "it builds the city of God." It alone builds it. For this the long history of the world is but a preparation. For this the world waits. The city of God, — the New Jerusalem which John saw "coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for

her husband," — this it is that stands at the close of the scenes presented by the Bible, as the Garden of Eden stands at their opening. Perfection at the opening, perfection at the close; but how different! In the one, the perfection of nature and of innocence; in the other, of costly magnificence, and of a multitude whom no man can number, redeemed, pardoned, "washed in the blood of the Lamb." How appropriate is each in its place! — the garden as the abode of the first pair, the city as a symbol of a perfect, social, and corporate life. From nothing seen on earth could a city have been associated with a perfect social life. How sublime the confidence in the renovating power of Christianity that could do that! And it was just that that was needed. Nothing else could stand at the close of the vista in the place of the New Jerusalem that would so kindle the imagination, and draw the affections, and satisfy the highest tendencies of man. No other consummation could so glorify God.

And here we find the third element in the complex end proposed by Christianity, — the glory of God.

This results immediately from the other two, and cannot be separated from them. From the attributes manifested through Christianity, this glory is higher than any other. The heavens, especially the heavens of modern astronomy, declare the glory of God; but it is a glory of wisdom and of power, — a glory that pales before that of wisdom and of love, finding their culmination in mercy harmonized with justice. If, as has been well said, the stars send up a silent song to the glory of God, it is indeed silent compared

with that voiced and conscious utterance which John heard going up "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Such voices, connecting earth with heaven, and time with eternity, opening to man his highest destiny, and bringing to God his highest glory, carry with them their own evidence as divine, and are in striking contrast with any thing science or philosophy has to offer.

We have, then, as the one complex end proposed by Christianity, the perfection of the individual, the perfection of society, and the glory of God. Neither of the first two can be complete without the other; and from the completeness of both must result the highest glory of God. An end like this is proposed by no other religion. It is worthy of God, is approved by reason, and makes revelation analogous to nature by carrying its schemes out to an extent and perfection that transcends the imagination.

But, if perfection be thus an end of man, — indispensable to the further end of glorifying God and enjoying him, — why does he not attain it? That he does not, all concede. Except where Christianity is, there is no tendency towards it, but the reverse. What is the difficulty? Was there original imperfection? or has there come a blight over that which was once fair and perfect? These questions the Old Testament answers, and reveals sin as the one obsta-

cle that comes between man and his end. The New Testament accepts the answer given by the Old, and claims to remove the obstacle. Hence we say,

In the fourth place, that Christianity not only differs from other religions in its origin and essence and end, but also *in being a remedial system wholly conditioned on the fact of* SIN.

The import and reach of the fact of sin must be understood if we would understand the Bible; for, according to that, the whole history of the world, both natural and moral, turns upon it. Without attempting to explain the fact itself of sin, the Bible explains by that all that is perplexing in our present state, whether in man or in nature. Is nature out of adjustment with man, yielding him food only by the sweat of the brow? Is he subject to disease, and at length to a death that carries with it a sting? Is man at variance with himself,— his passions and will on one side, and his reason and conscience on the other? Do men defraud and injure and kill each other? Is man estranged from God, either questioning his existence, or rejecting his authority? The cause is sin. So says the Bible. Is it right? We say, Yes. For what are estrangement from God, and selfishness and malignity, and the rule within of passion and will, but forms of sin? But these, and the evils coming from them, are the great evils. Let man be at peace with himself, with his fellowmen, and with God, and the sunshine of God's smile would so rest upon life, that its whole aspect would be changed. If decay and death would remain, yet death would have no sting, and nature would become more friendly through a fuller subjection to man.

Coming, then, as the greater evils of life do, from character rather than from outward condition, the Bible is plainly right in attributing them to sin. Is it also right in affirming that the relations of external nature to man have been affected by sin? At such a suggestion science stares, and positivism mocks. But there is a higher spiritual philosophy, in accordance with which we may rationally affirm, first, that matter is subordinate to spirit; and, second, that matter is always so adjusted by God as to be an expression of his feelings towards his creatures. Give us these two propositions, and we are content. The first, none but a materialist will deny; and the second will be denied by no one who believes in a moral government. Doubtless, one object of the adjustments of matter is the training of the intellect. For this they are admirable; but this is subsidiary to moral impression, and for that the principle will be that the physical surroundings of moral beings shall correspond with their character.

That this is a principle of God's administration, we infer because both congruity and justice demand it; because men instinctively act upon it; and because it is so wonderfully applied in the present mixed state of things, where its application would seem most difficult. Not only does Nature task the intellect as constructed on scientific principles, and become a companion for man as reflecting his every mood, and show a deep correspondence between matter as now arranged and the mind by furnishing a material origin for all words expressive of mental states; but the amount of good and evil in Nature corresponds to that in man, and is just what it should be in a state

of trial looking forward to a final separation of the two. Placed in a world where there is something of moral goodness and something of wickedness, with tendencies to higher degrees of both, man finds in Nature both the promise and the threat; the materials from which Hope may construct her heaven, and from which Remorse and Fear may build their place of torment. No correspondence could be more perfect than that between the mixed character of man and the characteristics of Nature and of the animals around him. This, we think, fixes the place and uses of matter, and establishes a principle that is universal. If so, not only must the greater internal and social evils be traced back to sin, but also the physical evils. The storm within not only finds its analogy with that without, but accounts for it.

But, whatever account may be given of the origin and issues of the present state, it is certain that the Old Testament assigns sin as the cause of all there is in it that is disastrous and perplexing; and that the New Testament accepts the solution, and makes it its one business to remove sin and its consequences. It was said of Christ before he was born, that his name should be called "Jesus," because he should "save his people from their sins." If there had been no sin, he would not have come; there would have been no Saviour; there would have been no call or place for Christianity. It is remarkable how distinctly it puts itself on this ground. Distinctively it is not a religion at all, or a system of morality, but a remedial system. It declares that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; and proclaims itself to be but a temporary dispensation, looking

forward to a time when Christ "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father," "that God may be all in all."

As thus distinctively remedial, Christianity is theoretically perfect. It satisfies the conscience by its provision for expiation, and the reason by its provision for personal renovation, and deliverance from sin through the power and aid of the Holy Ghost. Under other systems there has been the idea of expiation; but the combination of that with the indispensable element of renovation, and of a conformity to a holy God in moral character, is peculiar to Christianity. This is a marvellous combination. Without it, the system could not be remedial; without it, the idea of expiation can only encourage sin.

It is of the essence of Christianity to be a remedial system. As such, it is perfect. But combined with it, and a part of it, is also a perfect system of religion and of morality. The religion is perfect, because it satisfies the reason by requiring a worship that is in spirit and in truth, and by presenting a God who is worthy to be thus worshipped; and because it satisfies the affections by presenting this God not only as just, but as placable, and as a Father. The morality, as has been said, is perfect, because it springs from love.

It is this combination in Christianity of a remedial system with a rational system of worship — that is, with what is properly a religion — and with a perfect morality that adapts it to man in all his relations and wants, and makes it to be so the system for him, that no other is possible. No such combination is approximated in any other religion. That it exists in Chris-

tianity shows that Christ comprehended all the elements of the problem to be solved in the restoration of a guilty being under a perfect moral government, — a problem probably the most complex and difficult that could arise under the government of God.

Nor does Christianity as a remedial system present itself simply as comprehending the problem to be solved, and as perfect in theory. It is not a mere doctrine or exhortation, but differs from other religions as embodied from the first in institutions of expiation that have had an historical development. These all pointed to a wonderful Person who was to come. That Person came. From his coming, Christianity at once cast off all that was typical, local, adventitious, retaining that which was remedial, spiritual, universal; but, in doing this, it preserved its historical character by making itself dependent on a new set of facts, some of which are so its doctrines, that, without them, it could have no power. From this point, ignoring devices of human wisdom, grappling in seeming weakness, utter weakness, with the powers of evil, it set on foot a practical system, not for the subversion or renovation of institutions or of governments, but for the spiritual renovation of individuals through a teaching ministry and the power of the Holy Ghost, which has been leavening society from that time to this.

At this point I make a stand, and call attention to Christianity as primarily, distinctively, and avowedly a remedial system, conditioned solely on the fact of sin. As such, it is neither the product of the religious nature putting out its tendrils, and uttering elevated sentiments and high aspirations, nor a blind and

passionate expression of a sense of guilt through self-torture and the sacrifice of the natural affections; but it is a broad solution, in clear vision, of the great problems of life as they are connected with the existence of evil, and a persistent and practical attempt, continued from the beginning, to combat and remove the evil. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil."

What a contrast, then, have we here between Christ standing at the centre of a great remedial and historical system, combining with it, also, a perfect system of worship and of morality, and any philosopher merely uttering his own speculations! What a contrast between him and the founders of religions with no antecedent history, who either ignore the great problem for man, as needing both a remedy and a religion, as needing both to have guilt removed and to draw nigh to God, or else leave the elements of that problem in a wholly confused and nebulous state! How impossible that such a system, with such a central personage, producing such results, should have been the joint work of Jewish chroniclers and bards in ancient times, and of Galilean peasants and fishermen in times more recent! As well might we suppose that they could create the earth and the heavens.

The chief objection to the view now presented will be found in the place assigned to the fact of sin, especially as bearing on the physical universe. Of this fact physical science knows and can know nothing. Pantheism, positivism, fatalism, can know nothing of it. Still it is in full accordance with the highest philosophy, which is one of freedom, and of the suprem-

acy of will, — one which makes matter flexible to spirit, and subordinate to moral ends. It is a philosophy which accepts the being of a personal and holy God who can be sinned against. It enthrones and exalts moral law till it gives a place to the transgression of it, even on this little planet, which requires a redemption as transcendent as if the diameter of the earth were equal to that of the solar system. It smiles at the scepticism which would disparage what is done here in settling or in illustrating principles of moral government, because our planet is but a speck; as if these principles, belonging, wherever settled, to the eternities and to infinity, could have any relation to times or places or magnitudes or distances; as if, indeed, the very smallness of the planet, and, if you please, of the sin, did not render more conspicuous the grandeur of that all-pervading law which would permit nothing to escape it, and which would make the transgression of it by its feeblest subject, in its remotest province, an occasion for its highest manifestation. On this point we ask nothing more, we accept nothing less, than the estimate of moral law implied in the words of our Saviour, when he said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." Accepting this, we shall find no difficulty in believing that the highest use of the material universe is to subserve moral government.

Between man and his end, sin intervenes, — that only. This Christianity recognizes, and differs from other religions in being a remedial system based wholly on that. But sin and its consequences are to be removed; and, in removing them, —

I observe, in the fifth place, that Christianity differs from other religions *in its* METHOD.

If Christianity had not originated in the love of God, its peculiar method would not have been possible; but, originating thus, it must follow that the first movement, both in providing a remedy and in its application, would be on God's part. In the idea of expiation through sacrifice offered by a priest, Christianity is not peculiar. Possibly this idea, so universal, may have originated from the blind gropings of the religious nature under a sense of guilt; but the idea of a love in God so great that he should first move towards man, and should himself provide the sacrifice, — as Abraham said to Isaac, "My son, God will provide himself with a lamb for a burnt-offering," — that idea is peculiar to Christianity. To a being filled with the apprehension and distrust engendered by guilt, such an idea could never have occurred.

Plainly there are two general methods, and but two. One is, that God should provide something for man's acceptance; the other, that man should provide something for God's acceptance. One is, that man should make offerings, or undergo sufferings, or work out an obedience by which he may be saved: the other is, that he should accept a salvation freely offered by God, and then obey him through that faith and love in his heart which were involved in the very act of acceptance. Of these, God's method is, himself to provide the sacrifice, and to offer a free salvation. Sin was too great a thing to be atoned for by man. It was "not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Only

"by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" could we be sanctified. In virtue of this offering, itself originating in the love of God, and accepted by him, Christianity proffers a salvation wholly free. In this is its essence. Man has absolutely nothing to do but to accept it, yielding himself into the hands of God just as he is, with no previous attempt to make himself better. For that he is to rely entirely on the tempers wrought in him in connection with the acceptance, and on the promises and provisions made by God for aid in a life of new obedience. It is not obedience first, and the acceptance of God's offer afterwards, but the acceptance of the offer first, and obedience through that. It is the proclamation to all of this salvation, free as water, that is the evangel, the gospel, the glad tidings. It is this that makes it to be tidings to be believed, instead of a system of philosophy, or of dogmas to be understood. A provision for sinners, it comes to all who feel themselves such on precisely the same terms. A provision of God, it is equal to every case. The chief of sinners is not beyond its reach.

Under other religions, all this is reversed. There is no love on the part of God. The movement begins with man. Meritorious work, in some form, is made the ground of hope; and there is no labor or suffering that men will not undergo on this basis. They make the fundamental mistake of seeking to improve their condition without improving their character, — a mistake which is at the root of all formalism and of most superstitions. Even under Christianity men will do this; thus showing a sense of need in proportion to their opposition to God.

The contrast between Christianity and other religions at this point, and the evidence of its origin from God, becomes more striking as we observe how this offer of a free gift is received by men. If it had been generally and cordially welcomed, we might have supposed that the idea originated in the desire of men for it; but it is this very offer that is the special ground of repugnance. The implication of sinfulness in its doctrine of expiation, and of helplessness in that of a free salvation, together with the requirement of a holy life, are so distasteful, that nothing excites stronger opposition. Hence neglect, contempt, ridicule, persecution; hence the sneer at evangelical religion that haunts polite literature; hence the illy-suppressed bitterness of the bland liberal who can tolerate any thing but this. A religion which could not fail to be thus "everywhere spoken against," which had within itself the consciousness that its profession would cause "a man's foes to be those of his own household," has no affinity at this point with any other religion, and could not have been from man.

In being thus a gift to be accepted, instead of a religion into which we are born, Christianity draws after it a distinctive feature of Christian countries, which is both a puzzle and a stumbling-block to others. The puzzle is in the application of the Christian name to those who do not accept the religion: the stumbling-block is, that Christendom is not an exponent of Christianity.

With such an origin and essence and end, with such an apprehension of the obstacle between man and his end, and with such a method of removing it, —

I observe, in the sixth place, that Christianity differs from other religions in being adapted to universal dominion, in having looked forward to that from the beginning, and in having organized a body of both men and women pledged to carry it out to that result.

On these points a word must suffice. The adaptation of Christianity to become universal results from its spiritual character; from its dealing directly with individuals, and dealing with them only in what pertains to all men as under the moral government of God. Wherever there is a sinner to be saved, there Christianity is needed, and is adapted to come.

The sublime fact that Christianity (for it was really that) has looked forward to universality from the beginning is seen in the promise to Abraham, that in his seed all nations should be blessed; and in the last command of Christ, — so simple, so decided, so comprehensive, — "Go, disciple all nations."

This command was addressed to those who heard it as disciples, and not as men; and, whether women were present or not, there can be no reason why they are not as much bound by it, both in letter and in spirit, as men. Needing the same salvation, members in common of an organization in its very constitution aggressive, they are to be co-workers with men and with God in bringing the world back to him.

In thus elevating woman to all that is permanent and highest in work, Christianity is altogether peculiar. In doing so, it initiated, in an imperceptible and unobtrusive way, a radical revolution of society. Where woman is the companion of man, with equal

advantages for culture, and has an equal and intelligent interest in social institutions, the whole spirit and aspect of society is changed. The family becomes sanctified; motherhood and sisterhood become an angel guardianship; and in rational comprehension, with an intelligent and cheerful helpfulness, men and women give themselves to the realization of the end proposed by God. So, and so only, can the foundation be laid of a civilization that shall be permanent, and permanently progressive.

The work of subduing the world to God by the elimination of sin is wholly a moral and spiritual work. In doing it, Christianity understands itself; and

I observe, in the seventh place, that it differs from other religions *in relying wholly on moral and spiritual means.*

That Christianity itself — pure Christianity — should be persecuted was to be expected. Claiming universal dominion, it is necessarily exclusive; and it was natural that other systems should struggle against it with whatever of life was in them. But that Christianity should use either force or physical appliances was not to have been expected. It never did or can do this, except through perversion. Neither of these has any relation to belief, to love, to character, in which are the ends of Christianity; and Christianity never sanctioned the use of any means that would not subserve its own ends.

For its perversions under the forms of superstition and persecution Christianity itself is not responsible. Upon all such perversions God has cast a blight. A Christianity so called, either planted or sustained by

these means, has always become corrupt and effete, like paganism itself, which it really is. God has no respect to names: and he is showing men that nothing that is not the product of truth and love can be permanent; that only Christianity can sustain Christianity.

I will only add, that Christianity differs from other religions *in its* FOUNDER.

This, it may be said, does not affect the religion. It would not if Christ had been merely a sage or a prophet. But he was more: he was the central personage in an organic and unfolding system that goes back to the beginning of history, and reaches forward to its close; and his person and work and character and claims, and the facts concerning him, are of the very substance of his system. Take Plato away, and Platonism remains. Take Christ away, and you have no Christianity. Take away his person as divine, his character as sinless, his death as sacrificial, his resurrection, his ascension, and his personal relation to each of his followers as a Saviour, and you have little left worth contending about. Christ not only made a revelation, but he was one. He was "the brightness of the glory of God, and the express image of his person;" and Christianity differs from other religions by all the difference between the revelation which God has made of himself in Christ and any thing else that claims to be a revelation.

As thus a revelation of God in the form of man, and so *the* MAN, the Head of the race, Christ became a new force in history, a marvellous central personality, around whom a deeper interest has been constantly gathering since the hour of his crucifixion.

Through this only can we account for the effects that have been wrought by the life and death of One, who, aside from this, was but a young man, without learning or property or office, who wrote nothing, whose public life was less than three years, and who was crucified as a malefactor. Around this Person the interest will continue to deepen. It is to HIM as the centre of a personal influence, and not to laws and tendencies, that we look as the hope of the world. We believe that he now lives to administer a moral and spiritual system made possible only through his coming and death. That system, we believe, is moving forward as never before to the displacement or destruction of whatever may oppose it. We believe that He who is at the head of it, and who once came in lowliness and was rejected, will come again, at the end of the dispensation, with power, and will bring in an everlasting kingdom of righteousness and peace. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

Having, then, a religion with such an origin and essence and end, with such a condition and remedy and method, with such promise and means, and with such a Founder, we call upon those who reject it to give us something better. Some religion we must have. If you must take this from us, we call upon you to give us one with an origin grander and more touching than the love of God, with an essence purer and nobler than love, with an end higher than the perfection of man and the glory of God. Give us one that accounts more rationally for the evils of life than by sin, and that offers for them a better remedy than the life and death of the Son of God and the aid of the Holy Ghost. Give us a freer salvation;

give us a grander outlook into the future; give us for our work better means than those that are moral and spiritual; give us for our Saviour and Head and King one who loved us better than to die for us, one more sympathizing than to be "always with us," one mightier than to possess "all power in heaven and in earth," — give us this, or cease, we entreat you, your efforts to take from bewildered and sinful man his best aid and guide in life, his only hope and consolation in death.

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